

West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area



Workforce Investment Act

Local Plan 2009-2010

Submitted by:

**The West Central Wisconsin
Workforce Development Board
&
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WIA Plan

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I. GROW Region Workforce Needs, Labor Market Analysis, and Assessment of Workforce Investment Activities and Assets

A. GROW Region Workforce Needs

Describe the workforce investment needs of the GROW Region as they relate to:

1. Workforce Investment Needs

a. Employers/Businesses

The West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area Planning process has identified three core areas of need that apply to employers:

1) Worker Availability . Until the late fall and early winter of 2008 there had been considerable concern in the region that the supply of workers did not equal demand. The region, until recently has been experiencing record levels of employment and the lowest rates of unemployment in history. The area has a relatively low population growth rate due to both low birth rates in recent decades and low levels of in-migration which amplified the potential of worker shortages. High workforce participation rates in the area partially offset these trends; however, this also means that there is a smaller pool of individuals to draw into the labor force in times of high demand. Additionally, the region's population is aging which will result in somewhat lower participation in future decades as the large post-war generation reaches retirement age where workforce participation rates drop significantly.

While these and the additional trends that follow are indicative of long-term needs to better match worker supply with employment demand, the depth of the recent economic crisis began to materialize in January 2009 with sharp increases in unemployment rates and numbers of unemployed. Since January unemployment rates in the region have risen to levels exceeding the state average registering a 9.8% unemployment rate in March. Four of the region's nine counties currently are experiencing unemployment rates approaching or exceeding 11%.

The region has a greater proportion of its workforce that commutes out of the area for employment than commutes in. This is particularly true in the western sections of St. Croix, Pierce and to a lesser degree Polk Counties. These western counties employment is significantly impacted by forces in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

While the area is rich in educational resources and has high post-secondary student populations, due to the presence of three state universities and two technical colleges, it has historically exported much of this youthful talent due to the perceived lack of career opportunities. Currently that significant resource of younger, more highly educated individuals is facing a climate of greatly reduced demand with limited job prospects both within and outside the region.

The current state of the labor market presents significant challenges for non-traditional employees including minorities, older individuals, youth, individuals with disabilities and other populations for whom past difficulties in gaining access to job opportunities has re-emerged. Employers who are hiring, will find increasing availability of displaced, experienced and skilled workers who will be in a much better competitive position to obtain the limited number of currently available employment opportunities. While longer-term trends may allow employers to consider these more marginally prepared individuals in the future, they will experience increased competition in the short-run.

2) Worker preparation . Do available workers have the skills necessary for available employment? The current surplus of skilled workers may temporarily slow the longer-term concern that those individuals available for employment lack the skills necessary for available jobs. As the economy improves and opportunities re-emerge, even these displaced skilled workers may well find their skills lag behind those desired in the labor force of the future. Industry will attempt to adopt more

technologically advanced work processes to be more competitive. Workers who fail to continuously improve their skills will find the labor market has moved ahead of their productive capacities. This will place the less employable individuals in an even more disadvantageous position to attain employment in good paying jobs as their skills will be even further behind those of their more experienced competitors. Many area young people from our educational institutions will continue to seek professional careers and may not be as readily available for entry-level manufacturing, service and retail positions as in past generations even though those positions may have higher skill requirements than in the past. Therefore there may continue to be a mismatch in the interests and also qualifications of the labor supply and the demands within the economy. These trends will continue to pose challenges for the economy and for the workforce and education and training systems that are attempting to be responsive to continually changing trends.

Employers frequently voice concerns that the workers that are available for entry level positions often lack basic work-maturity skills such as dependability, ability to work with others, initiative and productivity. Limitations in work-related, basic academic skills are another area of concern. Area manufacturers report considerable need for individuals to develop better applied mathematics skills as well as improved abilities to comprehend written materials and instructions.

Many employers, when able to offer employment opportunities, continue to report concerns regarding available individuals' ability to benefit from such training without improved work behavior and basic skill foundations. This will, again be a reduced concern while these positions can be filled by more experienced workers with demonstrated work capacities, but will return as a concern as those more practiced workers are absorbed back into the economy. Computer literacy is frequently cited as an area of need due to the increased prevalence of computers in all areas of employment and is a skill that even dislocated workers who have not mastered will need to pursue.

In better times, the need to increase awareness of the general requirements and expectations of employers was frequently cited as an area of concern. Strong sentiments were expressed as to the lack of awareness of the realities of employment in the region as well as the opportunities that are available (see below). This also leads to concern that individuals are unaware of the skill requirements for available jobs which hinders the process of selecting appropriate training and education to prepare for those opportunities. These concerns will re-assert themselves as economic recovery progresses.

The region has a very diverse economy with nearly all occupational and industrial sectors having skill training needs. These occupational demand areas can change significantly over a five year period, so it is more important to have a system to gauge on-going employer demand. The goal of the local Job Centers is to capture as high a percentage of area job orders as possible in order to more accurately identify those trends that exist in the local economy. Specific areas expected to regain prominence in occupational demand are shown under the occupational demand section of labor market information portion of the plan that follows in section IB.

3) Worker Retention . What is necessary to retain workers in employment and in the area? Of equal concern to the availability and preparation of workers is the retention of individuals who employers have invested resources in to recruit and train. Employers have been demonstrating innovative approaches to maintain their skilled workers and avoid lay-offs due to fears of their recent difficulties in finding and retaining qualified employees. Less productive workers, however, are at relatively greater risk as are newer hires. These workers are those most certainly in need of skills upgrading during these periods of economic downturn.

There continues to be significant sentiment that area residents lack awareness of the career and employment opportunities that exist in the area and thus often feel it necessary to look elsewhere to achieve their career potential. There is particular interest in increasing the awareness of area educators and students of the career potential that exists in the immediate area in order to

encourage young people to seek careers in the region. Even in these more challenging times, many employers recognize the need for community supports for individuals to aid them in maintaining themselves in employment. The lack of affordable dependent care was frequently identified, as was the lack of affordable housing and access to transportation in a predominantly rural area where commuting several miles to work is common place.

b. Job Seekers

Employers frequently voice concerns that the workers that are available for entry level positions often lack basic work-maturity skills such as dependability, ability to work with others, initiative and productivity. Limitations in work-related, basic academic skills are another area of concern. Area manufacturers report considerable need for individuals to develop better applied mathematics skills as well as improved abilities to comprehend written materials and instructions.

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Job seekers voiced concerns very parallel to those of area employers including:

a. Lack of awareness of area opportunities, employer expectations, job requirements and working conditions at area firms.

b. Pay and benefit rates for area jobs were often perceived to be low compared to worker expectations.

c. Many job seekers possess employment barriers that, even in a tight labor market, may limit their access to available employment opportunities including:

- 1) Poor or sporadic work histories
- 2) Work behavioral deficiencies
- 3) Basic skills deficiencies
- 4) Job skill training deficiencies
- 5) Lack of job and career awareness including opportunities and requirements/demands
- 6) Child/dependent care cost and access
- 7) Transportation
- 8) Health and disability concerns
- 9) Inability to effectively present themselves to employers
- 10) Affordable housing and other personal financial issues
- 11) Family and interpersonal relationship issues that impact work

d. The rapid pace of change makes it difficult for workers to keep pace with workplace demands and know which education and training direction to take to prepare for their employment future.

c. Incumbent Workers

The primary concerns identified for incumbent workers fell into the following categories:

- 1) The need for workers to keep pace with a continually changing work environment with greater demands for technological and interpersonal skills. Workers react differently to the need for continual training and upgrading of skills. Some workers readily adapt to change and recognize the need to continually upgrade skills and productivity through life-long learning and development, while others are threatened by this challenge.

- 2) The need for individual/family supporting employment with adequate compensation, benefits, stability and access to promotional opportunities. Recent history is still in the minds of many area workers who remember significant layoffs, plant closings and downsizing in area firms. They are often presented with information that indicates that the area wages are below those in other areas of the country.
- 3) Work-related challenges to job retention including:
 - 1) Dependability
 - 2) Productivity
 - 3) Interpersonal, team and supervisory relationships
 - 4) Basic skills deficiencies
 - 5) Workplace safety
 - 6) Work quality
 - 7) Initiative and motivation
 - 8) Non-work challenges that impact on work and productivity including:
 - a) Child and dependent care issues
 - b) Family and inter-personal matters
 - c) Housing and other personal finance matters
 - d) Health issues
 - e) Transportation

d. Youth

Needs relating to youth fall into categories of those needs expressed about youth and those expressed by youth. Youth commonly cite the following issues as being of concern:

1. The lack of opportunities compatible with their needs and interests in their home communities.
2. Non-work pressures and competition for time including social, peer, educational and extra-curricular activities that effect availability and interest in work.

Those who express concerns about youth generally cite the following:

1. A lack of appropriate preparation in basic literacy and other academic skills.
2. A lack of understanding of the requirements of work
3. Poor work ethic and lack of motivation
4. Lack of awareness of available opportunities
5. Lack of specific job skills.

These perceptions may not be totally accurate on either part. Youth may lack awareness of available opportunities, while employer contact with less qualified entry level applicants may negatively skew their overall views of the status of the youth workforce. Work environments and opportunities have changed drastically in recent years and many individuals are not aware of the opportunities that are present in their local communities. Young people seeking entry level employment are disproportionately comprised of individuals with employment barriers as many higher skilled young people are enrolled in higher education, which may limit their availability for many local labor market opportunities. Communities with high student populations, however, have an often under-utilized resource for workforce participation and worker retention.

2. Describe any workforce investment need in your WDA not reported in 1.a-d.

Youth workforce activities are focused on Career Pathway Academies that combine the elements of community service, education, training, career exploration and longer term career development within high demand career sectors to help meet the future workforce demands in West Central Wisconsin. A career pathway is a means of describing a business sector's advancement options, and the journey the person takes along this path to achieve family supporting wages and career fulfillment. Career pathways exist in all shapes and sizes and, in today's work environment are starting to look more like lattices or webs than the traditional ladder model, with workers moving to similar level jobs for

comparable pay to gain knowledge and experience before making another upward move. West Central Workforce Area is integrating RISE and Career Pathway concepts into its Youth programming as a major strategic initiative including links to Youth Apprenticeship and other Work-based learning opportunities. This effort is endorsed by and overseen by the Regional Youth Council.

3. Describe how these needs were identified.

The basic premise for the Academy concept was presented to our two sector alliances, Manufacturing Works and Health Works as a means to increase awareness and preparation for careers in those two high demand sectors. These sector committees endorsed the concept and the first Manufacturing Academy was initiated the summer of 2007. In 2008 a health care career Academy was initiated to include Certified Nursing Assistant training. Academies in 2009 continue to focus on health care and manufacturing but we will also add emphasis on Renewable Energy / Bio-Technology / Green Jobs and introduce youth to careers in sustainable agriculture. Future Academy development ideas we are investigating include; Finance Careers, Hospitality, Tourism and Customer Service, and Automotive Technology. While much of the actual implementation occurs during summer when youth are more available, the academy concept has expanded into the school year with preparation work and integration with school centered work-based learning activities.

B. Labor Market Information

West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area

The West Central region continues to experience the highest population growth of Wisconsin's eleven Workforce Development Areas. Population for the region exceeded 443,000 in 2008 and has grown at a rate of 6.8% since the 2000 census surpassing the state rate of 3.2% and the national rate of 5.3%. This growth is anticipated to continue well into the future with the region's population approaching 500,000 by 2018. This regional growth continues to be heavily influenced by migration from the Twin Cities area of Minnesota into St. Croix County, the state's fastest growing county. These population increases, however, are not limited to St. Croix County alone, as five of the region's counties are projected to exceed the national average in growth to 2015 resulting in an overall regional growth projection of 20% over that time period compared to the state's 9.7% rate and the nation's 14.5%.

In 2008, the region's labor force averaged 260,496 including 247,814 employed residents and 12,682 unemployed. The 2008 average unemployment rate for West Central Wisconsin was 4.9 % but has recently jumped to 9.8%, doubling in the last three months. The highest unemployment rate is being registered in Polk County (12.6 %) and the lowest rate of 7.4 % being in Eau Claire County. This compares to a current unadjusted state wide unemployment rate of 9.4% percent, a significant increase from the previous year, and the highest annual average unemployment rate in recent years.

These growth projections, which differ from those of the balance of the state of Wisconsin, also include population characteristics that differ from those of the state. The West Central Wisconsin region is anticipated to have a higher percentage of prime working age residents and will present a somewhat younger population profile than that of Wisconsin as a whole. This characteristic places the region in a relatively better position than much of the state in regard to workforce availability and participation into the future.

During the same period where population is anticipated to grow by approximately 60,000 persons, until the recent economic downturn, the regional economy was expected to add over 57,000 new jobs. It must be noted that the above mentioned population growth is across all age groups and even though the region is better positioned than other areas of the state, the working population growth will be lower than the growth in available jobs. Additionally, it was projected that another 67,000 replacement workers will be needed to refill vacancies in existing jobs as the baby-boom generation increases its rate of retirement.

While the current recession has created a worker surplus situation, we recognize that the long-term will pose significant challenges to prepare, attract and retain sufficient numbers of workers needed to maintain and grow the regional economy. If, however, these current conditions persist for a prolonged there is potential for the longer-range job growth patterns and worker shortage estimates to be altered.

One factor that must be considered as critical to addressing the longer-term trends in the region must be potential workforce represented by the student population found at three University of Wisconsin four-year and one two-year campuses in the region. Total enrollment in these institutions is currently in excess of 25,000 students. While this group participates in a large number of part-time-temporary retail, hospitality and service occupations during their tenure, their professional and technical capabilities go largely untapped. These institutions will graduate over 4,500 degreed students annually, many of whom may migrate from the region to pursue opportunities perceived to be in greater abundance elsewhere. Those perceptions may be altered by current conditions and an active effort needs to be continued to alert these students to employment potential in the region and to harness the entrepreneurial potential that exists within these students and faculty.

The region lacks a strong indigenous corporate base that can provide opportunities for professionally trained individuals, while such opportunities are prevalent in the neighboring metropolitan economy. This presents a challenge to develop opportunities that can absorb professionally trained individuals as well as the challenge to educational institutions to align educational opportunities with those that do exist in the economy.

Another related structural issue within the region is that of wage rates which are well below state and national averages. While wage growth has accelerated in recent years, the region continues to have the second lowest per capita income of the states' workforce development regions. The proximity to the significantly higher wage structure that exists in adjacent Twin Cities economy makes workforce retention and attraction a critical issue for the region. This relatively easy access to more diverse and higher wage employment opportunities can lure graduates and higher skilled area residents away from opportunities within the region. This presents the dual challenges of providing more information to potential candidates about opportunities that do exist within the region and to encourage development that will improve the wage structure within the regional economy.

Areas where high growth is anticipated to occur include Healthcare, Retail Trade, Services, Transportation and Warehousing, Manufacturing, Construction, Accommodation and Food Service. All of these areas show significant income potential with the exception of Retail Trade and Accommodation and Food Service. Additionally, occupations within these industry areas also show high rates of replacement worker need as well as new job opportunities.

It will be essential that the region focus on tapping all of its resident talent as well as becoming an attractive destination for individuals seeking economic opportunity. This will include maximizing the participation of individuals with disabilities, older individuals, and other non-traditional employees who possess attributes that may require some accommodation and preparation to secure their participation in the economy. The region continues to be relatively homogeneous in its racial and ethnic mix but the profile of the population is gradually changing. The concentrations of Hmong in the Chippewa Valley, Somalis in Barron County, and Hispanic individuals in rural Clark County show that the region has the capacity to welcome a more diverse population base. The potential of the region's educational resource base to serve as both an attractant and resources for retention of diverse individuals is a definite plus in this regard. Additionally, proximity of the Twin Cities as both a source of more diverse population growth for the region and a resource to provide diverse populations with access to cultural attributes that may not be readily available directly within the West Central region will be of great importance in efforts to diversify the population base.

As we look at workforce trends, we know America's workforce faces a number of challenges:

- The workforce is aging . no new growth of workers between the ages of 25 and 54 is expected through 2020.
- Approximately 75 percent of new job growth is expected to occur in small businesses.
- Due to changes in technology, some 40 percent of tomorrow's jobs do not exist today, and only 20 percent of today's workers will have the skills that 60 percent of tomorrow's jobs will require.
- Four out of five new jobs will require some post secondary education.

Local High Demand Industries and Occupations

Health Care

Healthcare is among the largest industry sectors in the region with 28,842 jobs currently, lagging behind manufacturing, retail trade and government which includes public education (k-16). The healthcare sector is projected to experience the largest numerical increase in employment (7,232) over the next ten years for a growth rate of 25%. This projected growth exceeds both state and national averages. Replacement worker needs are also projected to be exceedingly high with an aging workforce coupled with high turnover rates in key entry level positions such as home health aides. The combination of new and replacement worker needs in the occupational groupings associated with the industry range from 35-44%.

Larger employers in the region include Sacred Heart Hospital, Luther/Middlefort, a Mayo Health Systems affiliate, along with hospitals and clinics throughout the region including Menomonie, Barron, Rice Lake, Cumberland and other communities are among the largest sector employers. Marshfield Clinic, headquartered just east of the region, has affiliates in Eau Claire, Menomonie, Rice Lake and other communities also. There is significant penetration in the western margins of the region from large Twin Cities healthcare operations which have acquired or established branches in this part of the region. These acute care facilities are supplemented by extended care and long-term care facilities located in communities in each county in the region. Homecare operations, lead by Community Health Partners, are growing rapidly under new structures which are now coordinating homecare provision throughout the region through multi-county networks of home care providers. Demand is rising with shortages occurring in many of the entry level home health aid and nurses aid positions throughout the region as well as a variety of nursing and medical technology positions.

Manufacturing

Information prior to the current economic downturn showed that the region's diverse manufacturing industry at its largest employment sector with over 35,000 jobs and a projected 10 year growth exceeding 5,400 jobs. This results in a rate of 16% which is significantly higher than projected state (0%) and national (1%) averages. Replacement worker needs will outstrip those related to growth resulting in combined new and replacement worker demand approaching 45% and exceeding 10,000 workers for production occupations. Fabricated metal manufacturing is the largest subsector with over 5,000 jobs. Other major types of manufacturing in the region include food processing, machinery, plastics and rubber products, and computer and electronic products. The nature of these types of manufacturing is most likely responsible for the region fairing better than other areas of the state in terms of manufacturing employment. Many of these products are highly exported, taking advantage of the dollar's current weakness against foreign currencies to sell goods cheaper abroad. Much of the statewide manufacturing employment loss has occurred in paper and wood product manufacturing which are not highly represented in this region.

Large regional manufacturing firms region include TTM (electronic circuits-Chippewa), Turkey Store (food processing-Barron), Nestle (food processing . Eau Claire), HTI (computer components-Eau Claire), 3M (Dunn/Barron), Midwest Manufacturing (Building Products-Eau Claire), and Cardinal Glass (Glass . Dunn).

The West Central region of Wisconsin continues to be Wisconsin's fastest growing Workforce Development Area. Population estimates from Economic Modeling Staff Strategic Advantage service

indicate the population for the region has grown from 448,497 in 2006 to 459,940 in 2007. This growth of 11,443 persons represents a growth rate of 2.55% for the year; more than double Wisconsin's growth rate for the same period and substantially higher than national growth estimates. Similar growth patterns are anticipated to continue well into the future with the region's population approaching 520,000 by 2017 for a regional population growth rate of nearly 13%.

Regional growth will continue to be heavily influenced by migration from the Twin Cities area of Minnesota, primarily into St. Croix County, Wisconsin's fastest growing county. Whether or not the economic downturn currently being experienced nationally and regionally will impact these trends is yet to be determined. St. Croix County, with an anticipated growth rate of 30.2% in the next ten year period, is projected to be the region's most populous county by 2017. That population is projected to exceed 107,000, just edging out the perennial regional population leader, Eau Claire County (8.7% growth) which is projected to exceed 106,000 residents in the same ten year period. Additional high-growth rates are projected elsewhere in the region with Pepin (29.8%), Chippewa (13.5%), Polk (11.9%), Pierce (9.1%) and Dunn (9.5%) counties all exceeding both state (5.5%) and national (8.9%) growth rates. Only Barron (5.7%) and Eau Claire are estimated to exceed the state average but fall below national average growth while Clark County is projected to experience population decline. We differ with the Clark County estimate as we feel there are high-growth population groups (Amish/Mennonite and Hispanics) in the county that are being under represented in population estimates. We also feel that Barron County's population may be understated by failures of the population models to account for the extensive Somali refugee population (600+) and Hispanic farm worker communities that have settled into the county.

In addition to these growth projections exceeding state rates, there are structural differences in the population which also differ from those in the balance of the state of Wisconsin. The West Central Wisconsin region projections continue to indicate a higher percentage of prime working age and very young residents, presenting a somewhat younger population profile than that of Wisconsin as a whole. This characteristic places the region in a relatively better position than much of the state in regard to workforce availability and participation into the immediate future.

The following data on unemployment, employment, and labor force represents annual averages for the full reference years (2007 & 2008). The average annual unemployment rate actually declined slightly from 4.8% in 2007 to 4.7% in 2008. This represented an actual decrease of average numbers of unemployed from 12,942 to 11,995 persons. During the same period employment also increased from 247,504 to 257,709 persons. However, the more recent scenario presents a drastic change from this optimistic profile. In March 2009 the number of unemployed in the region were estimated to have more than doubled to 25,583 and the employment estimates dropped markedly to a level of 236,597.

The following information is, again, representative of data generated prior to the recession and may be more indicative of longer-term trends than what more current data would generate. Later projections may result in modification of these growth scenarios if the recession is prolonged.

During the same period where population is anticipated to grow by approximately 60,000 persons, the regional economy was expected to add over 43,000 new jobs. The job growth rate for the region (16%) was considerably higher than both the State (11%) and National (10%) job growth projections for the ten year period. In addition, replacement jobs are projected to be needed at a higher level (78,908) than previously reported. The combination of new and replacement jobs indicates an increased need for workers in the region of 122,114 or 45% increase. This compares to a state rate of 41% and a national rate of 40%.

For an even more challenging picture, couple this localized supply-demand scenario with that from the somewhat broader regional perspective that includes the Twin Cities metropolitan area to which West Central Wisconsin is integrally linked. The Metro area population is expected to grow in excess of 250,000 in the next ten years, reaching an overall population of over 3.3 million (exclusive of the Wisconsin contribution to metro population). During this same period the Metro economy is expected to add in excess of 172,000 jobs (a moderate rate increase of 8%). Replacement jobs, however, are

anticipated to exceed 684,000 for a combined growth and replacement rate of 39%. While these are lower rates than those of West Central Wisconsin, the sheer volume of these opportunities, their diversity and their proximity amplified by the significant wage differential that exists between these adjoining regions will increase the competition for attracting and retaining the talent necessary to meet the needs of the West Central Wisconsin economy.

Regarding that wage differential, the current median and average hourly earnings estimates for the West Central Wisconsin region are \$16.07 and \$17.69 per hour compared to Twin Cities Metro rates of \$19.02 and \$20.58 per hour. While West Central Wisconsin's wages are below average for Wisconsin and Wisconsin's wages are below the national averages, the Metro Area rates are well above national averages. Additionally, the structure of the Metro economy presents a significantly more diversified occupational and industrial profile than that found in the West Central region, thus offering a broader, deeper and more financially lucrative range of career opportunities. Our regional proximity to these assets, however, provides significant opportunity for attracting individuals who wish to be close to urban amenities, but do not wish to be surrounded by the less attractive aspects of that same urban life. The challenge will be to provide a greater depth and breadth of opportunity within the region, address the compensation issue to the degree necessary to be attractive enough so that the small town and rural lifestyle next to a major urban center can prevail in the attraction and retention effort.

One source readily available to address this current and pending shortage is the highly educated student base found in our institutions of higher learning. The 25,000+ students found at our three University of Wisconsin four-year and one two-year campuses in the region provide a talent pool that would be the envy of any regional economy. We must find more creative solutions to the attraction and retention of those students beyond their current substantial contributions to the part-time-temporary retail, hospitality and service occupations they occupy during their all too short tenure in the region. We must find methods to tap their professional and technical capabilities for the good of the regional economy. Providing attractive opportunities for the 4,500+ annual graduates of these institutions is a major challenge for our regional development efforts, but one that will have tremendous dividends for the region once achieved.

Sector Strategies will build upon our traditional areas of strength in the manufacturing and healthcare sectors, while venturing forth into newly STEM related Bio-Agricultural and Bio-Fuel industries which are beginning to show a presence in the region and have natural connections to the education structures here and corporate structures in the Twin Cities metro area.

C. Assessment of Current Workforce Investment Activities in the GROW Region

The West Central region has been active in identifying its assets and needs for a number of years through its collaborative planning process which regularly inventories the service base of partner agencies. This information forms the basis of the asset analysis that follows. In addition to this ongoing process, partner agencies provide input through the Collaborative Planning Team process as well as being provided access to the web-page format that allows individuals or organization to provide input.

1. Adults, Dislocated Workers and Displaced Homemakers

West Central Wisconsin is relatively rich in workforce investment assets. The region has been in the forefront of Job Center development for a number of years. A Job Center is located in each area county.

The technical college system has major campuses Eau Claire, Rice Lake and New Richmond, with satellite centers in Chippewa Falls, Menomonie, River Falls and Hudson. Job Center locations include Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Menomonie, Neillsville, Pepin, Rice Lake, River Falls and Balsam Lake. The region is also home to three University of Wisconsin campuses that include UW-Eau Claire, UW-River Falls and UW-Stout in Menomonie. These post-secondary institutions are tremendous workforce development assets for the region, providing extensive training opportunities

for adults and dislocated workers. They are also assets in attracting businesses to the region as well as drawing-in individuals seeking education, training and employment opportunities.

The region also has active business and economic development organizations that are increasingly turning their attention to workforce development issues. Several area chambers of commerce maintain workforce and education related committees that provide opportunities for collaboration and networking with the business community. Economic Development organizations are very supportive of the Job Center and area education and training systems as they recognize their importance and attracting and retaining employment opportunities for the region.

The business community itself is a major asset to the region, providing increasing levels of training for workers. Area employees are also an asset in that significant numbers of area workers are pursuing employment related skill training while currently employed.

Workforce development activities in the region are quite diverse. Area Job Centers provide job fairs and other recruitment and employment matching activities on a regular basis. Area Technical Colleges and Universities have instituted much more flexible program offerings to allow employed individuals seeking to upgrade skills greater access to training, while also increasing access to training for area employers. Distance learning activities and on-site training are also increasing as strategies to meet employer and employee needs. The internet is a prominent means to gather information on training and service needs as well as providing access to information for those seeking services.

Emphasis needs to be placed on outreach to employers to more actively identify workforce development needs and outreach to potential job seekers to increase the pool of available workers for the opportunities available. There is a general need to upgrade the basic skills of many area workers and engaging employer participation in that effort to establish basic skills benchmarks and provide access and encouragement for those needing to upgrade skills. Increased marketing of workforce development services to the employer community is essential to gain participation and aid in the overall workforce development for the region.

2. Youth

Job Centers in the region are all actively engaged in youth employment activities. Job Centers are the focal point of area Summer Employment Initiatives as well as current year-round youth activities. These activities are linked with local school district school-to-work initiatives including those targeted at individuals with disabilities. Job Center staff are active participants in area school-to-work and tech-prep committees, assist with career and job fairs for youth, conduct Job Center orientations for youth seeking employment and career information and actively promote and develop work-based learning and youth employment opportunities.

The region is home to 55 school districts which are tremendous assets to workforce development in the area. The districts, in general, have high levels of achievement with high graduation rates, high scores on standardized tests and high levels of transitioning students to post-secondary education. Many schools promote work-based learning activities and other school-to-work initiatives. The districts aid the Job Centers in identifying youth eligible for program assistance and coordinating with Job Center services.

The two regional education agencies, CESA 10 & 11, provide an array of workforce development related services including coordination of school-to-work efforts in conjunction with the two area technical colleges. They promote a variety of applied learning staff development opportunities including the Cray Academy, Facilitating the Future and North Star Academy. Area technical colleges and university campuses provide opportunities for youth through the Youth Options program and other advanced placement classes.

A variety of community-based organizations provide local and regional youth activities related to workforce development including area Community Action agencies, Junior Achievement, Big Brother/Sister, Boy/Girl Scout programs and County Youth Extension Agents. Each of these organizations has activities that relate to career and vocational development of youth as a portion of their service strategy. Representatives of these organizations have agreed to serve on the area's Youth Council to assist in the coordination of WIA and other youth services in the region. Additionally, there are a variety of civic and faith-based organizations that provide related youth services and chamber of commerce committees that focus on education and school-to-work issues that are assets to the effort.

3. Employers

Services to employers are available through the Job Centers, Technical Colleges, Universities, chambers of commerce, economic development organizations and community-based organizations.

Job Center Employer Relations teams assist with recruitment for available job openings. The Job Center of Wisconsin Web site and Emailjobseekers.com are the primary vehicles utilized to promote those opportunities. Staff from a variety of partner agencies are active in development and implementation of Job Fairs held throughout the region.

Area Technical Colleges and Universities provide a wealth of training and technical assistance opportunities for employers. Their services are also integrated into the Northwest Manufacturing Outreach Center which provides specialized training and technical assistance to area manufacturers.

Area Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce organizations are increasingly active in workforce development activities due to the impact this has on business attraction and retention.

II. Regional Vision and Workforce Development Area Goals

OUR VISION FOR WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN

West Central Wisconsin is a region where:

- *Our diverse workforce meets the needs of area businesses and is productively employed in satisfying and rewarding jobs ...*
- *Our businesses are profitable, sustainable community partners that provide satisfying, rewarding career opportunities for all workers, and...*
- *Our communities provide the environment to attract and retain the diverse talent and stable businesses necessary to provide a strong and enduring economic base, and...*
- *Our workforce development system effectively and efficiently matches the needs of workers to the requirements of area businesses.*

THE MISSION OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

The West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board provides leadership to align the needs of a diverse workforce with the needs of business for a strong, sustainable regional economy.

B. WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal One

Assure that the Workforce Development Area policy development and governance structure is representative, empowered, engaged, and responsive to the region's needs and legislative direction.

Objective 1.1

- “ Maintain a County Board\$ Consortium that effectively represents the interests of each of the region\$ counties.

Objective 1.2

- “ Assure that the Workforce Development Board is business-led and representative of the entire region, its key industry sectors, appropriate partners and stakeholders.

Objective 1.3

- “ Assure Workforce Development Board members are engaged and empowered to effectively identify and address the essential workforce development issues of the region.

Objective 1.4

- “ Integrate the Workforce Development Board initiatives with those of other local and regional business, economic development, community development, and education/training entities to maximize effectiveness and enhance regional development.

Goal Two

Analyze the region\$ continually changing workforce development needs and assess the region\$ capacity to address those needs through sustainable strategies.

Objective 2.1

- “ Develop and maintain systems to continuously identify workforce demand including skill requirements and earning potential.

Objective 2.2

- “ Develop and maintain systems to continuously identify workforce availability and skills present within the workforce.

Objective 2.3

- “ Develop and maintain systems to continuously identify workforce development resources, and their capacities and capabilities (including those of area Job Centers).

Objective 2.4

- “ Develop and maintain systems to continuously perform gap analyses of workforce supply vs. demand, skills required vs. skills availability, and workforce development resource needs vs. resource capacity/capability.

Goal Three- Align and mobilize resources to meet the region\$ workforce development needs to foster a sustainable economy.

Objective 3.1

- “ Develop, disseminate and implement a workforce development strategic plan for the region that provides effective guidance and direction for initiatives in the region based on the above referenced analysis of area needs, resources and gaps.

Objective 3.2

- “ Function as a regional workforce development clearinghouse to maximize resource effectiveness, efficiency and collaboration.

Objective 3.3

- “ Reduce gaps in resource availability by advocating for, seeking, acquiring and supporting acquisition of resources necessary to address those gaps.

Goal Four - Increase community awareness and utilization of, and support for, the region's workforce development services.

Objective 4.1

- “ Increase job seeker utilization of and satisfaction with regional workforce development services.

Objective 4.2

- “ Increase employer utilization of and satisfaction with regional workforce development services.

Objective 4.3

- “ Increase community awareness of and support for regional workforce development services.

Objective 4.4

- “ Assure workforce development services are accessible to diverse customer- base, customer friendly, and have the capacity to assist customers with high quality, up-to-date information and services on:
 - “ Workforce demand and worker availability
 - “ Skills requirements and skills of the workforce
 - “ Career pathways and work preparation strategies

Goal Five- Maximize the participation and retention of all area job seekers and workers in satisfying and rewarding regional career opportunities.

Objective 5.1

- “ Increase awareness of, access to and retention in regional job opportunities for all workforce participants including under-utilized populations such as: veterans, limited English-speakers, older individuals, individuals with disabilities, public aid recipients and other %non-traditional+workers.

Objective 5.2

- “ Promote regional career opportunities and %career pathways+ to high demand, high-wage occupations to all workforce participants including: area secondary/post-secondary students, their parents and educators; veterans; dislocated workers; new workforce entrants; area out-commuters; out-of-area workers seeking relocation; and under-utilized low-income and non-traditional workers.

Objective 5.3

- “ Promote the acquisition of skills and attributes necessary to meet job and %career pathway+requirements of regional career opportunities.

Objective 5.4

- “ Address workforce demand by aiding employers and workers in employment retention and career advancement.

Goal Six- Continuously evaluate and improve regional workforce development services.

Objective 6.1

- “ Identify suitable measures of effectiveness and continuously evaluate performance in attaining those measures including:
 - “ Required State and Federal performance measures
 - “ Board identified measures
 - “ Customer satisfaction
 - “ Return on investment

Objective 6.2

- “ Establish continuous improvement plans to address ongoing challenges and meet performance expectations.

C. Describe the measures the WDB will use to track progress toward these goals.

Once initial planning and developmental objectives have been attained, the WDB will move to a system of twice annual continuous quality improvement reviews for each Job Center conducted by Job Center Management Teams coupled with WDB and Local Elected Officials representing each county Job Center area. Job Center Management Team Members will be charged with gathering and presenting performance information relating to their functional areas of responsibility and presenting that information to the quality assurance committee for each job center. These reviews will focus on progress in attaining goals established for each Center and for the region, including service outcomes, market penetration, customer satisfaction and continuous quality improvement measures. These reviews and subsequent reports will be compiled into a region-wide review of overall performance and utilized to develop recommendations for alterations in strategies or modifications of goals as determined by the WDB and Consortium.

D. Regional Strategic Planning

West Central Wisconsin recently completed a nearly year-long process of updating its strategic plan including vision, mission, goals, objectives and board member roles and responsibilities. This process used the planning that began in 1996 as a point of departure. A facilitator, Bruce Siebold, was utilized and speakers/consultants including Ed Barlow and Richard Longworth, were brought in to educate the Board on workforce and economic trends. This comprehensive approach involved partner organizations, business sector representatives, the regional education consortium, local elected officials the regional youth council and regional economic development entities. The results of this effort are incorporated into this document. The major result has been a significant increase in business engagement and enhanced acceptance of sector strategies as the means of operation for the Board.

The West Central WDB also has adopted the Career Pathways concept and RISE principles as cornerstones of its strategic direction and recently revised its strategic plan framework to incorporate those concepts. The Workforce Development Board personally committed to participate through adoption of a Board Member Statement of Purpose in which each member commits to reach out to their business and organizational colleagues to identify needs, engage associates and build the partnerships necessary to assure successful implementation of the RISE initiatives in this region. Members will participate, and where appropriate, provide leadership within the sector alliances and support networks that will form the foundation of this career pathway initiative. The WDB will: oversee and promote business participation in the revolving Gap analysis process; facilitate partnership development and collaborative effort; foster business engagement in sector and pathway efforts; identify, mobilize and coordinate available resources; advocate for additional resources necessary to address identified service gaps; evaluate effectiveness of Career Pathway efforts; implement strategies to assure Continuous Improvement; and expand Pathway efforts to additional populations and employment sectors as opportunities and resources present themselves.

E. Describe any WDA goals that are not consistent with the region's vision.

The West Central WDB goals are consistent with the region's vision.

F. In order to achieve the goals identified above, implementation strategies need to be developed. Describe the strategies the WDB will use to achieve the WDA's vision and goals for the GROW region.

The Workforce Development Board is committed to participate through adoption of a Board Member Statement of Purpose in which each member commits to reach out to their business and organizational colleagues to identify needs, engage associates and build the partnerships necessary to assure successful implementation of the RISE initiatives in this region. Members will participate, and where appropriate, provide leadership within the sector alliances and support networks that will form the foundation of this career pathway initiative.

III. Governance and Structure**A. Plan Input and Review Process****1. Consultation with Key Partners**

All Job Center partners, LEO's business and labor representatives, economic development entities and other partners and stakeholders have been made aware of the development of the Plan and have been given the opportunity for input.

2. Public comments received

Copies of the Plan will be made available for public comment from April 30, 2009 through May 31, 2009. It will be available at each Job Center in the WDA as well as the www.workforceresource.org website. Notification of the public review period will be posted on the website and published in community news papers throughout the WDA. Once approved, the plan will be posted on the website for regular public review.

In addition, the draft plan has been provided to each partner agency and made available to the public through each county's Job Center as indicated in public notices placed in newspapers in each county.

B. Local Elected Official(s) (LEO)

1. The West Central Wisconsin Counties Consortium (hereinafter referred to as the "Consortium") is the legal representative of the Local Elected Officials of the West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.
2. Section 9 of the WDB By-laws states:
%LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS: Local Elected Officials of the West Central Wisconsin County Board's Consortium shall be regarded as non-voting members of the organization and shall be granted speaking privilege at Board meetings at which they are present, but their attendance shall not be counted for purposes of determining a quorum.+
3. See Attachment A (Consortium Agreement)

C. WDB Functions

1. **Roles and responsibilities which may differ from those specified in the Act.**

The West Central WDB will carryout all responsibilities identified in the Act. In addition, the WDB has been asked to facilitate a Regional Development effort that is intended to result in a comprehensive plan for the region uniting workforce, educational, economic and community development.

2. Fiscal Agent

Workforce Resource Inc. is an organization made up of the former service and administrative staff of the Workforce Development Board has been designated as the fiscal agent by the County BoardsqConsortium.

D. WDB Composition

1. Nomination and selection process

Nomination solicitation forms and Board information packets were sent to each eligible business organization in the WDA. News releases were placed in area newspapers to inform the public of the vacancies that existed and the qualifications necessary to be considered for a seat on the Workforce Development Board. When inquiries were received, information packets were sent to potential appointees and they were referred to the appropriate nominating organization. Local Elected Officials also were provided with information packets and distributed them to potential candidates.

Nomination information received was reviewed by the County BoardsqConsortium in comparison with state/federal membership requirements and the plan of representation desired by the Consortium to assure geographic representation. Following review of information, the Consortium acted on appointments based on votes of the Consortium members at publicly noticed meetings and forwarded nominees to the Workforce Development Board to be seated.

A solicitation/nomination and appointment process for non-business members, similar to the business member process identified above was followed with the exception of press released specific for this purpose because non business seats were limited to specific organizations. Solicitations were sent to eligible nominating organizations, nominations were received by the Consortium, reviewed and appointments made based on votes of the Consortium members at publicly posted meetings.

2. Board Leadership Role

The organization's primary purpose is to provide workforce development planning, policy guidance and oversight of workforce development programs the West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area including Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pepin, Pierce, Polk and St. Croix counties of Wisconsin.

3. Conflict Of Interest

WDB By-laws: ARTICLE IX - CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No director, officer, or employee of the organization shall have or acquire any interest, direct or indirect, in any project which the organization is operating or promoting, or in any contract relating to any such project of the organization without making written disclosure to the organization of the nature and extent of his/her interest. No director who has had such interest shall vote on any matter relating to it. Further, no director, officer, or employee of the organization shall violate the conflict of interest regulations as established by funding sources or as established by or contrary to Wisconsin Statutes 181.225 or its successors thereto.

4. Membership List

An up-to-date membership list (Form A - Attachment B) is included in the Appendices.

5. Attach a diagram or description of the WDB subcommittee structure

See Attachment C . WDB Organizational Chart.

6. Describe how the WDB ensures that meetings and information regarding WDB activities are accessible to the public (including persons with disabilities.) (§117(e).)

An up to date calendar of scheduled meetings is posted on the website at

www.workforceresource.org

ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

Section 2:REGULAR MEETINGS: The Board of Directors of the organization shall meet at least quarterly at times and places convenient to the membership and accessible to the general public.

WDB vacancies

ARTICLE IV -Section 2: COMPOSITION, QUALIFICATIONS, NOMINATION, & APPOINTMENT: The Chair, executive committee or membership committee of the Board will notify the County Boards Consortium of any vacancy in order to begin the process of new appointee solicitation. Additionally, Board members are asked to forward any resignation to the Chief Elected Official.

7. By-Laws for the WDB.

The most current Bylaws may be found at:

<http://www.workforceresource.org/public/documents/wdboard/Workforce%20Development%20Board%20Bylaws.doc>

E. Youth Council

1. Roles and responsibilities

The Youth Council will function as a subcommittee to the Board and be strictly advisory. Roles of the Youth Council will include: providing advice to the WDB on strategic planning issues that pertain to youth; developing recommendations for the selection of youth service providers for WIA programs; providing oversight for WIA and other area youth programs; promoting development and participation in school-to-career activities that will assist in connecting all youth to the world of work.

2. Describe how the Youth Council is involved in developing youth policy.

The West Central Wisconsin WDB Youth Council actively participated in the strategic planning efforts referred to above and have been active in WDB regular Board meetings. The Youth Council worked with the WDB in the authorization and approval of the WDA Youth Procurement Process that was recently approved by DWD.

3. Assessment Of The Type And Availability Of Youth Activities

The two regional education agencies, CESA 10 & 11, provide an array of workforce development related services including coordination of school-to-work efforts in conjunction with the two area technical colleges. They promote a variety of applied learning staff development opportunities including the Cray Academy. Area technical colleges and university campuses provide opportunities for youth through the Youth Options+ program and other advanced placement classes.

A variety of community-based organizations provide local and regional youth activities related to workforce development including area Community Action agencies, Junior Achievement, Big Brother/Sister, Boy/Girl Scout programs and County Youth Extension Agents. Each of these organizations has activities that relate to career and vocational development of youth as a portion of their service strategy. Representatives of these organizations have agreed to serve on the area Youth Council to assist in the coordination of WIA and other youth services in the region. Additionally, there are a variety of civic and faith-based organizations that provide related youth

services and chamber of commerce committees that focus on education and school-to-work issues that are assets to the effort.

4. Conflict of interest codes of conduct

The Conflict of Interest provisions that are referred to in Article IX of the WCWWDB By-Laws will also apply to the Youth Council and all committees of the Workforce Development Board and committee members regardless of their status as Board members.

<http://www.workforceresource.org/public/documents/wdboard/Workforce%20Development%20Board%20Bylaws.doc>

5. Youth Council Membership Chart (Form B - Attachment D) solicitation and selection.

Solicitation forms were sent to each eligible nominee in the WDA. The Regional Youth Council was reappointed with revised and renewed membership as of April 27, 2007. This membership was reaffirmed by separate action of the Workforce Development Board and County Boards Consortium on December 4, 2008.

6. Youth Council Activities and Meetings

The Youth Council meets as part of regularly scheduled WDB meetings in addition to meeting as needed independent of the Board. It functions as a subcommittee to the Board. Members of the Youth Council have been active in the recent Strategic Planning Process and youth program planning have and will continue to meet at least bi-monthly.

Youth Council meeting schedules can be found at:

<http://www.workforceresource.org/public/documents/youth/Youth%20Council%202009%20CALENDAR.doc>

7. Youth Council Oversight Of Eligible Providers Of Youth Services

The Youth Council functions as a subcommittee to the Board and is strictly advisory. Roles of the Youth Council include: providing advice to the WDB on strategic planning issues that pertain to youth; developing recommendations for the selection of youth service providers for WIA programs; providing oversight for WIA and other area youth programs; promoting development and participation in school-to-career activities that will assist in connecting all youth to the world of work.

F. WDB Support and Administration

1. Administrative support

Primary staff support to the WDB will be provided by Workforce Resource staff. Workforce Resource is the administrative entity for the Workforce Development Board as a separate organization. Where segregation of responsibilities is required to avoid conflict of interest issues, staff will be assigned to the Board that shall be totally under the direction of the Board for those purposes and those responsibilities segregated from the Workforce Resource service structure or contracted from another independent source. At this point it is estimated the amount of staff resource provided to directly to the Workforce Development Board for its direct administrative purposes will amount to 1 full time equivalent position with such other support as necessary for administrative and fiscal support. Additionally, it is anticipated that other partner agencies will provide staffing assistance to the Board when addressing issues that are specific to those entities. Staff that will provide this support are anticipated to be those that are currently active in the One Stop Operator Consortium. Such support is estimated to involve providing annual summaries of program activities, participation in quarterly collaborative planning efforts and providing updates to the Board on issues of interest to the Board for which that agency has particular expertise.

2. Include an organizational chart of WDB staff, administration and support.

See Attachment C

3. Describe organizational changes that occurred during PY 07-08 and indicate additional changes that you anticipate for PY 09. Explain the reasons for the anticipated changes.

The West Central Wisconsin WDB did not experience any organizational changes during PY 07-08.

4. Programmatic, Infrastructure Or Organizational Changes

The West Central Wisconsin WDB did not experience any infrastructure organizational changes during PY 07-08.

5. Complete and attach a quarterly budget information summary if WDA allocations have been issued; otherwise, submit within 30 calendar days of receiving WDA allocations.

As of the date of this submission, no allocations have been made.

6. Attach a copy of the WDB's current Cost Allocation Plan.

A copy of the Cost Allocation Plan can be found at:

<http://www.workforceresource.org/public/documents/wdboard/Cost%20Allocation%20Plan.doc>

IV. One-Stop Delivery System

A. One-Stop Operator (OSO)

The County Boards' Consortium and Workforce Development Board acted during implementation of the Workforce Investment Act to endorse the Consortium Model as the method of One-Stop operation for the WDA. This plan provides for a modification of that original multiple Consortia Model based on an OSO for each Job Center to a single Regional OSO model. This modification will include representatives of the WIA, Job Service and DVR systems as core representatives to the OSO supplemented by delegates from the Technical College, W2 and Older Americans Act programs. Workforce Resource will be designated as the lead agency and fiscal agent of the Consortium, due to its being the only partner organization with presence in each of the Comprehensive and APS sites.

A Job Center Management Team will be appointed for each Job Center site to include contributing organizations to each Job Center and address day-to-day management of each center. A Center Coordinator has been designated to lead each Job Center Management Team.

1. OSO Membership Designation

OSOC representatives are appointed by their respective organizations. Members must have sufficient authority within their organization to effectively direct and manage the resources that have been committed to the designated sites by that organization. Questions regarding representation shall be resolved by the Workforce Development Board and County Boards Consortium.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Powers of the OSOC members shall be jointly shared. Any differentiation of roles or functions shall be delineated in memoranda of understanding and/or Job Center operating agreements.

B. One-Stop Service Delivery

1. Describe the One-Stop delivery system in your local area.

See Attachment F . One Stop Locations

The West Central Wisconsin WDA has a long-standing network of Job Center sites located in each county that have participation from a variety of partner agencies. This participation varies from site to site based on local organizational structures and variable participation from regional agencies. The specific participation of organizations will be found for each site in the MOU/Job Center agreement structure that is outlined later in this plan. This structure is designed to consolidate a variety of former agreements previously utilized to provide for the coordination of services at area Job Centers. The MOU process provides an umbrella structure to outline the participation, contributions, collaboration, service and administrative integration that will take place at each site with each partner agency. Information from those agreements will be aggregated to arrive at a specific integration picture and structure for each Job Center and the combination of each Job Center structure will comprise the regional description of integration. Core partner agencies to these agreements include Workforce Resource, Job Service, County W2 agencies, DVR and WTCS. Additional partners include Experience Works, Senior Citizen Employment and Training, HUD Housing and Youth Build, operated through community based organizations.

2. Integration of One-Stop delivery system for both businesses and Job Seekers

The West Central Wisconsin WDA has a long-standing network of Job Center sites located in each county that have participation from a variety of partner agencies. This participation varies from site to site based on local organizational structures and variable participation from regional agencies.

DWD, after several months of analysis, released plans in June of 2008 recommending that Job Service and the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation deploy staff to 2 regional hubs in West Central Wisconsin (Eau Claire and Rice Lake) by the end of 2008. The main goals behind this redeployment were to initiate improvements to the workforce system, save Job Service and VR dollars, establish a new virtual job center, and refocus Job Service priorities on assessment, counseling, resource room, and enhanced labor exchange services.

3. Describe how the WDB will ensure the quality of service delivery and continuous improvement throughout the One-Stop centers.

Continuous quality improvement will be emphasized through the development of annual quality improvement plans for each Job Center and requests for similar quality improvement emphasis from partner agencies as a part of their annual plan reviews.

a. WDB Progress Measure Toward Job Center Service Standards Attainment:

The WDB is committed to an oversight process that will include progress toward the implementation of Job Center Standards as a part of its review done in partnership with the County Boards Consortium. Primary responsibility, however, will be vested with the One Stop Operator Consortium and the Job Center/APS site teams. The OSOC will assess the status of each Job Center and APS team in attaining Job Center Standards determine needs for improvement, establish expectations for attainment and monitor outcomes. Corrective action plans will be developed and monitored to address any deficiencies.

Once initial planning and developmental objectives have been attained, the WDB will move to a system of twice annual continuous quality improvement reviews for each Job Center conducted by Job Center Management Teams coupled with WDB and Local Elected Officials representing each county Job Center area.

b. Baldrige . based Self-Assessment

The West Central Wisconsin Workforce Area system operates under Baldrige principles of Continuous Quality Improvement. As such the WCWDA is a data driven structure that makes use of all sources of information relevant to setting and achieving goals. Any deficiencies noted through customer feedback, DWD monitoring, Fact Finding, audits and internal reviews are viewed as opportunities for improvement. These concepts have been recently integrated in to a

Quality Site Review Process that was initiated early in 2009. This site based assessment of all activities is currently underway and will form the basis for continuous quality review process that will be instituted following completion of the initial review process. This process has been postponed until Fall of 2009 to allow for the work load adjustment necessary to address ARRA responsibilities.

c. WIA Continuous Improvement Assurance

The West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board and Workforce Resource are certified Enterprise members and as such infuse all activities with the philosophy of Resource has previously met the credentialing process of the Enterprise system and the Workforce Excellence Network. Performance data is an essential element of this process as it provides the %Business Results+by which an entity can determine where it is succeeding and where it needs to improve. Key to this process is access to accurate data which reflects the outcomes that are determined necessary to judge effectiveness. West Central WDA has been a leader in the development of accurate data collection and analysis methods and has provided systems and technical assistance to a number of other WDAs. Currently West Central is taking the lead in the development of an enhanced data collection and analysis system that will enable each WDA to access and analyze its own data in a much more cost effective manner. This internal system for tracking performance data by region, team and individual will be a significant improvement over current systems and will allow for the development of processes much more conducive to Continuous Quality Improvement. This performance data is and will continue to be gathered and the results evaluated to determine performance in relation to established goals for all elements of the WIA service system.

The Board will integrate the setting of standards, measurement of effectiveness and on-going progress assessments of all of these areas into its Quality Improvement strategies.

Job Center Management Teams will conduct quarterly reviews of standards in conjunction with committees of the Board. Annually there will be a detailed review of each Job Center's performance to identify quality improvement strategies in anticipation of the coming year's strategic goal setting. This becomes the process of continuous review, improvement and adjustment of goals and standards of performance and quality.

The Workforce Development Board will establish its own standards and metrics following completion of the Baldrige Express assessment. Attainment will be measured and reported on as a normal part of the Quarterly meeting structure.

4. Is each of the required WIA partners included in your One-Stop delivery system? Describe how they contribute to your planning and implementation efforts? If any required partner is not involved, explain the reason.

All WIA mandatory partners are part of the one-stop delivery system. However, since the realignment of DWD staff Job Service and the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation are now only housing staff at two Job Center Sites in the WDA, Eau Claire and Rice Lake. Therefore, only these two sites meet the Comprehensive Job Center definition, as is the case throughout the state.

5. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's)

Current MOUs can be viewed on the WDB Web Site at:

<http://www.workforceresource.org/wfpartner/access.html> See Attachment M to view an example.

V.Demand-Driven Workforce Investment System

1. Aligning Services of the Local Workforce, Economic Development and Education Systems

The WCWWDB has reorganized to become a more demand driven organization and to assure that regional service structures reflect that emphasis. The WCWDB has been studying the key industry clusters and sectors of the region in preparation for this increased emphasis. Those studies have identified the following sectors as areas emphasis:

- Healthcare
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Retail/Hospitality/Tourism
- Logistics & Transportation
- Service Industries
- Construction and Industrial
- Agri-Business
- Bio-Technology

Within those industries, efforts are underway to identify high demand and high wage occupations that show the greatest promise for job placement that will assist area job seekers in attaining economic self-sufficiency while also impacting necessary economic growth. WCWWDB is part of the RISE effort initiated by DWD and WTCS that is focused on developing and replicating career pathways that are accessible to low-skilled, low-wage working adults. The WCWWDB RISE Career Pathways Regional Initiative is exploring three major strategic directions to encourage industry engagement that focuses on the Health Care and Manufacturing Sectors:

- Developing Peer Networks around the efforts of Workforce Development Board Members
- Aligning with Existing Business Sector Alliances
- Organizational Outreach and Promotion

A Gap Analysis tool is being utilized as the common instrument to gather needs data from all sources. The Board has been structured in a way that better addresses business engagement and partnership development for RISE and other sector development activities.

In 2008 WCWWDB was awarded DWD/DET Emerging Industries Skills Partnership funds. The project addresses the current and future skill needs of new and emerging biotechnology employers in the West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area (WDA 8). Partners are working with biotechnology employers to identify industry skills and training needs that will support growth and sustainability in this industry.

The region has a relatively low wage structure that must also be addressed in order to bring about the income gains required for more self and family sustaining jobs. Occupations that are shown to provide higher wages and benefits, or which can be shown to be incorporated into a career path leading to higher wages will be prioritized for the use of Workforce Investment Act training resources. This will include occupational skills training, on-the-job training and customized training strategies.

Each participant being considered for WIA training assistance will participate in an income needs analysis process that will determine income requirements for individual/family self-sufficiency and regional economic impact as a part of their assessment process prior to training enrollment. Alternatives to achieving higher income, including exposure to non-traditional jobs, and orientation to higher wage opportunities and career pathways will be explored as a normal part of service strategy development.

The output from these efforts will be incorporated into staff development and training, program service media, workshop content and individual service strategy planning to provide guidance to participants, general job seekers, training providers, area employers, educators and the general public in the selection of occupational and career tracks that will address the occupational and skill demands of area business while addressing the higher wage needs of area workers and job seekers.

2. Identify and Work With Key Industry Partnerships Where and Coordinate and Invest In Partnership Infrastructure

Members are organized around the industry areas and communities they represent by the following industry clusters:

- Manufacturing
- Health Care
- Transportation and warehousing
- Construction / Utilities
- Agri-Business
- Customer and Personal Service
- Business and other Professional / Technical Services

3. Alignment of Resources To Meet The Needs Of Key Industry Sectors

The purpose of the WCWWDB Industry Sector Teams is to enhance Workforce Board capabilities to relate to these key industry sectors as follows:

1. Address the workforce development needs of each sector . including worker supply and demand, skill needs, and preparation strategies.
2. Determine the capabilities and capacity of the workforce development, education training systems to address those needs.
3. Enhance workforce development capacity where needed.
4. Educate industry sector members and the workforce development system on workforce development issues and trends pertinent to the sector.
5. Promote the services available to sector members to address their needs.
6. Advocate for resources and policy initiatives necessary to address workforce issues.

4. Describe the methods to be used within the GROW region to measure the progress toward the goals established in 1-3 above.

The Workforce Development Board is charged with enhancing the labor market information systems of the region. This information is a critical piece of the needs identification process as well as the strategic planning process that is dependent on accurate and timely information upon which base projections and trends that are necessary to guide regional efforts. Therefore, the labor market information function becomes an essential element upon which the success of many of the above referenced areas and issues will rest. To adequately supplement traditional sources of information we need to engage business partners to develop more timely, accurate and potentially real-time information on occupational and skill demand. Of equal importance will be the development of methods to obtain information on the characteristics, skills and capabilities of the current and potential workforce.

VI. WIA Title I Program Services

A. Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker/Displaced Homemaker Service Strategy

1. Priority of Service Due to Limited Funding

a. Provide a description of the criteria to be used by the WDB to determine if funds allocated to the local area for adult employment and training activities are limited.

Workforce Resource monitors applications and applies priority of service criteria on an on-going basis when making selections for program enrollments. This process balances enrollment priority decisions based on availability of resources in comparison to the pool of available applicants and their respective priorities for enrollment as stated in the plan.

The Workforce Resource funding allocation process provides each WIA Job Center team member with on-line access to budget, obligation and expenditure information for each funding source. Expenditures and commitments are tracked on a real-time basis in order to allow staff to know at any given time the status of remaining funds and any limits thereto. If funds allocated to a specific Job Center are approaching full obligation and/or expenditure, staff can determine if surplus funds are available elsewhere and if so request a supplemental allocation. Such requests are reviewed by WDA administration to determine the relative merits of any such request vs. leaving the funds where they were originally assigned. This system allows Job Center WIA staff to know the exact status of funds at any given time and to determine if enrollments need to be limited through the published priority of service criteria.

When it is determined that local adult funds are limited and it is necessary to implement a priority of service policy in provision of intensive and training services (including ITAs) to program eligible adults, veterans priority as well as priority to public assistance recipients and low income individuals required in WIA regulation will be considered. Within this context, the following sequence of services to a priority and special populations will apply:

Job Center Services

Job Centers will continue to give priority of service to Veterans. A Veteran is defined as:

- A veteran (is an individual who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable, which may include National Guard or Reserve personnel.), or
- The spouse of any of the following individuals:
 - Any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;
 - Any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for assistance under this section, is listed, pursuant to section 556 of title 38 and regulations issued there under, by the Secretary concerned in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days:
 - Missing in Action
 - Captured in line of duty by hostile force, or
 - Forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power;
 - Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability; or
 - Any veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence.
- A Military Spouse is an individual who is married to an active duty service member including National Guard or Reserve personnel on active duty. This priority includes, but is not limited to:

WIA/NEG/SRR Services

Workforce Resources web-based application process allows staff to quickly identify applicants who are veterans (see definition above). All veterans will be contacted. If it is determined that WIA Adult/DW/Youth, NEG or SRR funds are limited, priority of service (for both intensive and training services) will be as follows

DW/NEG/SRR

Dislocated workers who are veterans will receive priority over non-veterans.

Adult/Youth

1. First priority will be provided to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals in the local area who are also Veterans, or who are spouses of Veterans (see definition above).
2. Recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals in the local area
3. Veterans, or spouse of a Veteran (as defined above).
4. Individuals with the greatest need/most barriers. Barriers and needs include but are not limited to:
 - School Drop-out
 - Offender
 - Disability
 - Homeless
 - Basic Skill Deficient
 - Poor or sporadic work histories
 - Alcohol or other drug abuse issues
 - Child/dependent care cost and access
 - Transportation costs and availability

b. Describe how the WDB members will be involved in this process.

The WDB establishes the enrollment and service goals as well as the resource distribution to area Job Centers. The WDB is provided with monthly progress reports and either makes or authorizes staff to make such adjustments in such goals related to the availability of resources and other factors that may affect those goals. In addition, Quarterly Progress Reviews are conducted by the membership in conjunction with program administration and included scheduled onsite reviews of activities and progress as well as rationale for any adjustments in services goals and expectations. Formal progress measurement in attaining these goals and implementing strategies is conducted on an annual basis with goals and strategies revised as needed based on community input and analysis of performance.

c. Describe the process that the WDB will use to direct its One-Stop Operator(s) (OSO) to give priority to veterans and veterans spouses, low-income individuals and recipients of public assistance if funds become too limited to serve all interested participants.

To meet federal requirements, the first-served will be veterans and eligible spouses. To carry out this commitment, a service priority system has been developed to identify those individuals meeting targeted enrollment characteristics including those meeting Veterans Service requirements. This rating system will be employed whenever resource availability may necessitate the limitation of program access. In such cases the Veterans priority guidelines issued by the U.S Department of Labor will be utilized by program staff to guide their efforts in making enrollment decisions. These guidelines include assuring the prioritization for enrollment of any qualified Veteran or Veteran's Spouse over any other person registered for WIA program assistance should resource availability limit the ability to enroll individuals into such services.

Core services will be available to the general public, but intensive and training services, to the degree that they are available; will be targeted toward higher need populations including low income and public aid recipients. This region has a service prioritization system that has been in place for many years and involves individualized needs assessments that directly relate to combinations of income need and employment barrier determination. This system utilizes service prioritization including prioritization for individuals with disabilities, older workers, veterans, those seeking non-traditional employment opportunities and others experiencing barriers to employment. While the WIA will allow this determination to be streamlined and less cumbersome than in the past, the basic criteria for service will be maintained to assure that those most in need receive essential services.

When the WDB determines that local adult funds are limited and it is necessary to implement priority of service+ policies in provision of intensive and training services (including ITAs) to program eligible adults, veterans priority as well as priority to public assistance recipients and low income individuals required in WIA regulation will be considered.

First priority will be provided to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals in the local area who are also Veterans, or who are spouses of Veterans that fall into the following categories;

- Any veteran who died of a service-connected disability
- Any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for assistance under this section, is listed, pursuant to section 556 of title 37 and regulations issued there under, by the Secretary concerned in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days: (1) missing in action (2) captured in line of duty by a hostile force, or (3) forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.
- Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability
- Any veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence

2. Local Eligibility Policy

See Attachment G

3. Adult –Dislocated Worker Funding Transfer

There are no plans to transfer funds at this time.

4. Local Area Funds for Statewide Activities including incumbent worker training.

West Central is requesting the authority to utilize up to 10% of Dislocated Worker funds to support incumbent worker training in efforts to avert lay-offs. This request is not to be regarded as a commitment to expend resources for this purpose but only to allow it. We do not anticipate any negative impact on performance standards.

5. Allocations of WIA Resources (see Form E)

The Workforce Development Board (WDB) in collaboration with other local policy groups (such as the County Boards Consortium) establish the mix of services with Adult and Dislocated Worker Title I Funding as part of their yearly planning and budgeting process. Historically, the first priority will be to assure that the required WIA core services are available at each Job Center site. The degree to which use of WIA resources for those services can be offset by contributions from partner agencies will assist in determining the availability of resources for intensive and training services. Allocations to tiers of service are estimated to be:

- Core Services . 20%
- Intensive Services . 45%
- Training Services . 35%

Administrative fund distribution as established by the WDB is estimated as follows:

- WDB support: <2% of WIA resources
- One-Stop Operator: <2% of WIA resources
- Core/Intensive Services: <2% of WIA resource allocation.
- Training: <2% of WIA resource allocation.
- Other: <2% of WIA resource allocation.

Note: Local allocations have not been announced at this time.

6. Target Populations

The WCWWDA WIA program provides services to a wide array of populations with special needs, several of which are listed below. In general program staff are provided with extensive training in services to these significant segments through regular externally provided staff development activities. Program management trained in the provision of special needs services are also available to assist with program accommodations to assure adequate service provision.

a. Describe how the WDB will serve each of these significant segments of the population:

Low-Income Individuals including those receiving public assistance will be factored into the program prioritization system. Linkages with W2 programs through the Job Center and MOU systems assure that close relationships exist with agencies serving public aid recipients and other low income individuals. Pre-enrollment income and wage gain potential analysis is designed to assure that such persons are prioritized for enrollment.

Individuals Seeking Non-Traditional Employment are identified during pre-enrollment interviews and orientation workshops. Individuals uncertain of such interest are provided information on non-traditional occupations during orientation and intake procedures.

Individuals With English Language Deficiencies are assisted by bilingual staff who are stationed in key Job Center locations and who are available to travel to other Centers as needed. Such staff include Spanish, Hmong and Somali speaking individuals who are available to assist limited English speaking applicants and enrollees to receive necessary program assistance. Area Job Centers also have access to translation and interpretation services through resource directories and telecommunications methods.

Older Worker Services are available in each area Job Center through WIA services and linkages with resident or itinerant services provided by Experience Works or Senior Community Services Program.

b. Describe service strategies the WDB has in place or will develop that will improve meeting needs for customers with disabilities.

West Central services are fully coordinated with those of the Disability Navigator and through the efforts of that individual with Benefits Planners and others who target services exclusively to those with disabilities. The service delivery model utilized in this region is a Vocational Rehabilitation based model and many Vocational Rehabilitation trained staff are integrated into the service staff mix.

c. Describe how services to displaced homemakers will be integrated into the dislocated worker program

West Central operates a needs driven program design. Its services are prioritized based on the assessed needs of those seeking services with considerable judgment and flexibility vested in staff consultants who determine eligibility and need for services based on priorities established by the Board. Displaced Homemaker Services will be integrated into the job Center system in tandem with services for dislocated workers.

d. WDB's local policy that addresses how priority of service to veterans and other covered persons will be applied.

Veterans First: The Veterans priority guidelines issued by the U.S Department of Labor are utilized by program staff to guide their efforts in making enrollment decisions. These guidelines include assuring the prioritization for enrollment of any qualified Veteran or Veteran's Spouse over any other person registered for WIA program assistance should resource availability limit the ability to enroll individuals into such services. This prioritization applies to Job Center Services whether or not a resource shortage exists.

See Attachment H

7. Describe the methods and procedures that have been developed (or are planned) to ensure coordination and collaboration with the following programs:

- a. Offender reentry**
- b. TANF and Food Share Employment and Training**
- c. Adult Basic Education**
- d. Adult apprenticeship**

Linkages with the above programs through the Job Center and MOU systems assure that close relationships exist with agencies serving offenders, TANF and Food Share (FSET), Adult Basic Education and Adult Apprenticeship and other low income individuals.

8. Incorporating RISE Career Pathways Principles into Training Programs

WCWWDB is a current RISE grantee. Our initiative focuses on the Health Care and Manufacturing Sectors and is currently conducting a Gap Analysis to assess the labor needs of these two industries. Our current timeline is as follows:

Project Component	Benchmark	2008			2009					
		Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
Gap Analysis	Assess Labor Demand (current and projected)									
	• Analyze current labor market information	x	x	x						
	• Develop regional demand survey instrumentation	x	x	x	x					
	• Conduct sector-based surveys				x					
	Assess Labor Supply (current and projected)									
	• Analyze current labor market information	x	x	x						
	• Develop regional supply survey instrumentation	x	x	x	x					
	• Conduct regional labor supply analysis				x	x	x	x	x	x
	Analyze Return on Investment									
	• Identify employer/job seeker/institutional cost-benefit factors		x	x						
	• Develop information gathering methodologies			x	x					

Project Component	Benchmark	2008			2009					
		Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
	• Gather and analyze data				x	x				
	Scan current service provision									
	• Identify relevant training and service options				x	x				
	• Develop common data gathering methodologies				x	x	x			
	• Gather data on training and service capacities and capabilities					x	x			
	Identify service provision gaps						x	x		
Partnership Development	Identify Sector Partners	x	x							
	Gain partner participation	x								
	• Obtain letters of commitment	x								
	Establish vision, mission, goals, objectives		x	x	x					
	Formalize partner roles									
	• Develop MOU ^s document agreed upon roles and responsibilities			x	x					
	Create Partnership Development tool-kits						x	x	x	
	Conduct Monthly Partnership Alliance meetings	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Business Engagement	Identify employers	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Determine framework for employer partnership									
	• Develop and implement MOU ^s with sector alliances		x	x						
	Map career mobility patterns									
	• Identify occupational progression hierarchy within each industry sector				x	x	x			

Project Component	Benchmark	2008			2009					
		Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
	• Identify promotional and compensation relationships within the hierarchy					x	x	x		
	• Identify skill preparation relationships between occupations within the hierarchy						x	x	x	
	• Identify the capacity of training and service providers to respond to hierarchy requirements						x	x	x	
	Gain employer commitment									
	• Develop employer participation plan		x	x						
	• Develop format to document employer commitment		x	x						
	• Develop and disseminate promotional materials to secure employer participation			x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	• Develop format to document employer commitment		x	x						
	• Obtain employer commitment			x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	• Implement Peer Engagement, Alliance engagement and organizational engagement strategies			x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Develop employer participation									
	• Develop peer network engagement plans			x						
	• Develop alliance business engagement plans			x						
	• Develop integrated organizational outreach plans to secure business engagement			x						
	• Develop methodologies to determine effectiveness of business engagement strategies					x	x			
	Create Business Engagement tool-kits						x	x	x	

This phase of our RISE Initiative is scheduled to be completed in May 2009. Partners are in the process of developing the sustainability strategy and plan that will move the West Central Wisconsin Sector Strategy in a direction that will connect employers with skilled workers. WCWWDB will be pursuing support from the Wisconsin Sector Strategy Initiative to support this effort throughout our region.

9. WDB policies and procedures to support Unemployment Insurance (UI) Profiling and reemployment services activities.

WIA dislocated worker resources are utilized to support the UI Profiling Workshops currently conducted in Eau Claire and Rice Lake in the region. These services are provided in collaboration with Job Service. WIA funded staff assist with Job Center assessment and job search workshops and job search planning for Unemployment Insurance claimants. These individuals are also assessed for appropriateness for referral to more in-depth dislocated worker services and enrolled in retraining and reemployment services as determined appropriate for their needs.

10. Describe the methods the WDB developed to respond expeditiously to plant closings and layoffs.

Rapid Response Activities

Local WIA dislocated worker services are closely coordinated with state rapid response activities. Local and state representatives exchange information on dislocations, conduct joint early intervention sessions and plan for further intervention based on the assessed needs of those affected by announced lay-offs.

West Central Wisconsin dislocated worker services are highlighted by early intervention, access to comprehensive services, objective assessment, re-employment planning, individualized case management, varied occupational training, support services and job placement assistance. The Workforce Development Board has authorized Workforce Resource to be the coordinator of the rapid response system for the region. This system has been developed over a number of years and has resulted in development of a highly coordinated early intervention strategy. This system has been enhanced by the continued development of area Job Centers which facilitate a one-stop approach for individuals and groups who are dislocated from employment.

The system is based on an assessment that will lead to a re-employment plan. Those individuals with transferable skills will be referred to the Job Center seminars to assist with job search skills, resumes, application and interview skills to aid in transition to employment related to these skills. Those individuals determined as needing retraining assistance will be assisted in career planning to identify appropriate occupational directions and in accessing the training necessary to achieve those goals.

Most training will be secured through individual referrals to available training programs that evidence placement potential and are compatible with worker interests and aptitudes. Individual Training Account Vouchers will be utilized for this purpose. Access to basic academic skill training will be provided through area technical colleges for those who require improvement in these areas to enter further training or new employment. Customized training, including quality worker training, will be available where such training can be shown to provide a direct route to available employment.

Case managers will assist enrolled dislocated workers in implementing their re-employment plans through coordination of WIA with other resources. The Job Center will be the focal point of the job placement stage of the plan. Employer relations efforts will be focused on identifying available job opportunities and skill requirements to aid workers in determining the viability of their current skills and/or their need to acquire new skills.

Early intervention is initiated as indicated above. For those situations which are manageable within the sub state allocation, the Workforce Development Board will proceed to provide required services. Special Response Funds will be sought for those instances of dislocation which cannot be adequately addressed with local resources.

a) Community Response Team

Local response teams are in place throughout the Workforce Development Area and include WRI, Job Service, WTCS and Unemployment Compensation staff. They primarily operate out of the area Job Centers. Workforce Resource (WRI) contacts appropriate Local Elected Officials, and representatives of Job Service and other Job Center partner agencies, Unemployment Insurance, economic development and business organizations, and appropriate labor organizations to inform them of dislocations, coordinate activities and mobilize resources.

Based on the available initial information, WRI will determine whether to take a lead role in the coordination of efforts or to defer to another organization in a better position to assume a lead role. In either case, the WRI will attempt to assure that all appropriate parties are involved so all facets of the dislocation problem are being addressed.

Affected businesses, labor organizations, and community and economic development organizations are incorporated into the local response strategy specific to the dislocation incident.

b) Notification Of Appropriate Parties

WRI staff contact representatives of other local programs and DWD whenever it becomes aware of any substantial dislocation. These organizations are encouraged to contact the Workforce Development Board whenever dislocation occurs to aid individuals to gain access to dislocated worker assistance. Generally, initial contact will be made by local WRI representatives stationed in each county. WRI administrative staff will be available to assist whenever appropriate.

c) Initial Outreach To Company And Union Officials

Upon learning of a dislocation, local response team representatives or agency administrative staff contact employer and employee representatives to inform them of services and solicit support for the delivery of services. Initial contact is generally made within 48 hours of awareness of dislocation. Follow-up contact will be tailored to the needs of effected workers.

d) Outreach To Effected Workers

The initial response is to inform workers of available services and determine their needs, interest and eligibility. This is done in group meetings at employment sites whenever possible. If such contact is not feasible, names of affected employees are sought from the employer or other sources to facilitate contact for orientation and assessment. The Workforce Development Board has an established process to provide this assessment, orient workers to available services and obtain applications within a one hour workshop that can often be held at the worksite. This assessment is utilized to determine if local resources are sufficient to address the projected needs of the workers. These orientation/assessment sessions are conducted in conjunction with WTCS, Job Service and Unemployment Compensation staff as well as business management and worker representatives whenever possible.

e) Initial Assessment

Surveys of service interest, background, needs and transferable skills are generally conducted during the early intervention stages. This process clarifies the type and scope of intervention strategy that will be required to effectively address worker needs.

f) Referral For Basic Readjustment And Retraining Services

Those who are determined eligible and a priority for service are encouraged to participate in the formal objective assessment process that will lead to the development of an

Individualized Service Strategy. This assessment will more thoroughly identify interests, aptitudes, educational and training needs. This assessment will determine the need for and level of readjustment and retraining services. Individuals will be referred for these services based on this assessment.

g) Regional Approaches To Provide The Above Services

A regional strategy is in place through the allocation and delivery of services through Job Centers located in each area county. Coordination takes place with surrounding jurisdictions to assure that residents from those areas employed in this WDA or those WDA residents employed outside of this area received necessary services in the most convenient location.

h) Services

1) Outreach, Recruitment and Participant Selection

The WDB maintains an intake center in each of the nine West Central counties. Staff in these offices are generally aware of dislocations that take place in area communities. Contact will be made with area community and economic development groups to inform them of the availability of dislocated worker services and obtain cooperation in identifying dislocated workers. Every attempt is made to intervene as early as possible when displacement occurs. Although area employers are encouraged to provide early notification and provide readjustment services prior to displacement whenever possible we have been experiencing lack of cooperation from a number of employers, particularly in the past year. Workforce Resource staff have made area Chippewa Falls. State Senator Pat Kreitlow (D-Chippewa Falls) and Representative Kristen Dexter (D-Eau Claire) aware of this barrier. In April 2009, legislation was announced that would strengthen Wisconsin's layoff notification laws by requiring that employers share local Job Center and workforce resource information with their dislocated employees. This legislation amends the law to require that employers also notify the area's workforce resource board, and in turn share information on resources available to dislocated workers with the employees being affected by the lay off.

2) Assessment of Educational Skill Levels

Each participant seeking WIA services through the Workforce Development Board is assessed for reading and math proficiency. Other educational areas are assessed as needed.

3) Vocational Assessment

WRI operates programs on a case management basis. WRI staff maintains a recruitment network designed to identify appropriate program. The "case manager" performs a diagnostic interview designed to identify relevant background information. Applicants are asked to participate in Vocational Planning Workshops which identify vocational values, interests and aptitudes. Assessment services are supplemented as needed from area technical college career planning centers or the UW-Stout Vocational Development Center. This assessment process will lead to the development of a Needs Assessment and Individualized Training Plan which must address all assessed employment and training needs.

4) Job Search/Job Club

All participants not immediately placed in training components will be provided with job search assistance that will consist of job seeking skills training, job search assistance and ongoing job club support. WRI operates ongoing individualized and group training necessary to develop a job search plan and the skills to implement it.

Assistance in this regard is to be provided through the field representative to whom the participant is assigned. Training focuses on the identification of job sources, resume development and interviewing skills development. Approximately 32 hours of such training provided is supplemented as needed through referral to WTCS or other service providers. A job search plan is developed and monitored on a weekly basis through participation in job club sessions.

- 5) Job Development/Placement Services and Counseling
Job Development and placement assistance is provided by the WRI Consultants and Customer Service Managers to whom the participant is assigned. That individual is responsible for coordinating job development with individual job search and referral to other employment sources such as Job Service. All participants will be required to maintain ongoing contact with the Job Center as a part of their enrollment. WDB staff actively participate in a regional job developer's network in which job leads are shared and referrals exchanged to assure the highest degree of success in meeting both employer and participant employment needs.
- 6) Follow-up
Follow-up activities are also the responsibility of the field representative. Ongoing contact with the participant is required during any program enrollment period. Post-termination follow-up is required at 30 days to maximize job retention and satisfaction.
- 7) Classroom Skill Training
Occupational training will be purchased largely through the state WTCS system with the potential to refer individuals to any program available in this system. West Central WDB currently sponsors students in programs throughout the state and in Minnesota. The majority of such training, however, will take place locally at Chippewa Valley and Wisconsin Indianhead Technical Colleges. Training will be provided in the full range of available training programs including individual classes, short-term training and one- and two-year diploma programs. For adults and dislocated workers, skill training will be identified utilizing the Individual Training Account system.
- 8) On-Site Skill Training
Employers who agree to hire and train participants on the job will be reimbursed for the costs of such training. Training agreements will be negotiated and monitored by WRI consultants. Training duration and reimbursement schedules will be dependent on the skill levels and needs of the individual and the requirements of the job.
- 9) Basic Skills and Remedial Education
Individuals assessed as deficient in academic skills will be provided access to training necessary to remediate those deficiencies. Training will generally be provided by area technical colleges, supplemented by literacy councils and other services providers as may be appropriate and available.
- 10) Support services
Services necessary to assist individuals in achieving employment goals are available for those lacking the financial or other means to provide them including child/dependent care, transportation assistance, emergency assistance and other services. The WDB has established mechanisms to assess needs and determine appropriate contributions to acquire such assistance as may be needed.

11. Describe the methods and procedures the WDB developed or will develop to expand coordination of service delivery with the Trade Adjustment Assistance program.

Staff collaborate with the local TAA representative on all dislocations as they occur. If possible, TAA representatives are present at all qualifying Rapid Response meetings.

TAA eligible workers are referred to TAA if they are considering full time school, and are encouraged to complete an WRI application form. Support services are coordinated between WRI and TAA and co-enrollment occurs when possible and beneficial to the job seeker.

B. Title I Core Services

1. Core Services

- Eligibility determination
- Outreach and intake
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs
- Job search and placement assistance
- Access to Labor Market Information
- Information on program providers
- Information on One-Stop system performance
- Information on available supportive services
- Follow-up services
- Information on filing unemployment compensation claims
- Assisting in establishing eligibility for employment and training programs not funded under WIA

2. Design for Title I Core Services

Title I Core Services Design

Due to the differential allocation of Wagner-Peyser resources in the area, WIA services will be tailored to the individual needs of each Job Center. Needs will be determined by the MOU negotiation process referred to earlier in this plan. The resource allocation will be reviewed with partner agency staff and the Board to determine the extent of services at each center. In general, WIA resources will share in the provision of all core services at each Job Center, as there are not sufficient resources available to meet these needs for other sources.

WIA will concentrate resources on the following services depending on the availability of other resources to meet needs. WIA will provide extensive resources and staffing for Job Center core and intensive services for adults and dislocated workers as follows:

- “ Reception, intake, referral, initial eligibility determination
- “ Resource room, information on job openings and job demand
- “ Assessment and career planning
- “ Providing consumer information on the scope and effectiveness of available education, training and workforce development services
- “ Determination of training needs, issuing Individual Training Account vouchers
- “ Making referrals to appropriate services
- “ Providing seminars and individualized assistance with applying for jobs, developing resumes, job search training and job development services
- “ Conduct employer relations and outreach to secure job orders, assist employers with recruitment, preparation, job retention and job advancement needs

3. Provide a copy of the WDB supportive services policy as an attachment.

Services necessary to assist individuals in achieving employment goals are available for those who lack the financial or other means to provide them including child/dependent care,

transportation assistance, emergency assistance and other services. The WDB has established mechanisms to assess needs and determine appropriate contributions to acquire such assistance as may be needed. See Attachment I.

C. Intensive Services

1. Describe any intensive services that will be provided in addition to those identified in Section 134(d)(3) of the Act.

No additional services are planned at this time; however, the WDB will continue to assess the service needs of the area and will consider additional services as needed.

2. Intensive Services Coordination

One Stop Service Coordination

All Title I WIA Intensive Services are delivered through the One Stop Delivery System and coordinated through the methods outlined in the One Stop Delivery System Description, the One Stop Operator Coordination Process and the MOU process that governs the process of information sharing and program coordination.

3. WCW WDB's Definition Of "Self-Sufficiency."

Self Sufficiency Definition

The WCWDB regards self-sufficiency as 200% of poverty to be consistent with the criteria utilized for other programs to determine eligibility. Additional factors to be considered include determination that individuals are able to meet economic needs including nutrition, housing, transportation, health care, childcare, and maintain limited discretionary spending without reliance on public assistance or subsidy.

D. Training Services

1. Percentage of Training Funds Earmarked For ITA, OJT, And Customized Training

The amount of training funds allocated for specific activities is estimated to be:

- Individual Training Accounts . 70%
- On-the-Job Training . 25%
- Customized Training . 5%

2. Adult/Dislocated Worker/Special Response funds to train for middle skill, demand jobs.

We would contend that all training resources meet this criteria. All training is based on an individual needs analysis of each applicant as described below. These job seekers are made aware of training for occupations that match their individual skills, abilities and interest and the type and availability of jobs in the sectors that have been identified as high demand and high wage in our region. Career Pathway strategies are being developed to guide this effort to prioritize movement to middle skill jobs. An analysis of each participant's career goals is conducted and a pathway design implemented designed to identify a career plateau that will result in sustainable wages and benefits. This analysis includes an examination of occupational demand and wage projections in comparison to economic needs of the individual.

3. ITA system description and ITA policy.

WDB Policy for ITA System

The West Central WDA has an existing system of training vouchers that will be modified slightly to meet WIA requirements for Individual Training Accounts. An individual needs analysis including determination of eligibility for other forms of financial aid will be completed for each applicant for training assistance. Applicants must have participated in one intensive service and have been determined as unable to obtain appropriate employment without training assistance. The duration of training shall not exceed the lesser of, the time necessary to complete an associate degree program (generally a two year duration limit), the actual completion of the selected program or duration established by virtue of funding limitations established by the

Workforce Development Board and/or Workforce Resource. The dollar amount of training vouchers shall not exceed the lesser of: the unmet need identified through financial aid analysis, (less suggested loan amounts), the actual cost of tuition, books, fees and supplies or the amount established by the Workforce Development Board and/or Workforce Resource based on funding availability and service goals.

4. Describe and attach the WDB's policy and procedures for adding, monitoring and removing training providers from the ITA list.

See Attachment J

5. Describe the WDB's intent to use exceptions (contracts) instead of or in conjunction with the ITA system. Address the following issues as applicable:

a. Describe the WDB's policies for OJT and Customized Training opportunities including the length and amount. Submit the WDB's OJT policy and customized training policy.

The WDB has established policies for On-the-Job Training and Customized Training relating to the type of training allowed, duration and amount of reimbursement.

See Attachment K

b. If a determination was made that there is an insufficient number of eligible providers, describe how this determination was made and the competitive process to be used in selecting providers under a contract for services.

There does not appear to be any lack of eligible training providers at this time. Any determination of the lack of training providers will be made on a case-by-case basis as individual training needs are identified. There is however, insufficient capacity in key training areas for demand occupations, which differs from sufficiency of eligible training provider availability. Sector teams are currently working with training providers to address these issues.

c. If the WDB intends to serve special participant populations that face multiple barriers to employment, describe the criteria to be used to determine the demonstrated effectiveness of community-based organizations or other private organizations that serve these populations.

Initially the WDB will utilize the system of targeting services to hard-to-serve previously employed under the Job Training Partnership Act for this purpose while other mechanisms are evaluated.

6. Describe the WDB's policies for the following and provide copies as an attachment:

a. WDBs are given flexibility to decide the documentation they wish to use to justify a participant's "need for training." Describe the documentation required to demonstrate a "need for training."

Need for training is established by an individualized assessment process which must determine:

- The individual's economic status and need
- The job placement potential of the individual in the absence of training
- The type of training that would be assist the individual in meeting economic self-sufficiency needs
- The appropriateness of the desired training in regard to the individual's skills, interests, ability to benefit and projected placement potential following training
- Cost-benefit of the desired training

b. Needs Related Payments

The WDB has policies in place that enable it to provide needs related payments, however, such payments are very costly and limited by the availability of funding. Alternatives to needs related payments include part-time and temporary employment during training, paid internships, support service payments, work-study and other means to provide for the economic vitality of individuals desiring training. See Attachment I.

7. Describe the WDB's current or planned coordination and collaboration efforts with the following programs:**a. Manufacturing Skills Standard Certification (MSSC)**

WRI is a Current MSSC Grant Recipient that is promoting the use of MSSC among area manufacturers and workers.

b. Customized Labor Training (Department of Commerce)

WRI actively coordinates services with area economic development agencies and training organizations and will refer employers for CLT assistance when needs are identified.

c. Wisconsin Advancement Training Grants (WTCS)

WRI is open to collaboration with area technical colleges in the implementation of WAT grants and will refer employers identified as in need of such assistance.

d. Regional Industry Skills Education (RISE)

West Central is currently a RISE grantee and is incorporating Career Pathway concepts as integral to its employment preparation efforts. This includes working with two sector teams currently with plans to expand into other sector areas as opportunities arise. Additionally, the WDB and WRI are collaborating with a current RISE training effort in Neillsville conducted by CVTC.

8. Describe how the WDB will encourage bridge programming, contextual remediation training and chunked curriculum for occupational training as describe in the Wisconsin RISE initiative.

The WCWDB will continue to work with the region's technical colleges system (CVTC, WITC) in curriculum development that is based on the results of RISE gaps analysis and encourage bridge programming, contextual remediation training and chunked curriculum for occupational training that meets the demands of the region's high wage/high growth employers.

E. Youth Program**1. Describe how the WIA youth program supports and/or partners with the following programs:**

a. Youth apprenticeship: WCW actively coordinates its youth activities with youth apprenticeship and other work-learning strategies through its youth council and youth service coordination efforts. Youth Academies are linked to Youth Apprenticeship whenever possible.

b. Job Corps: WCW will refer youth to Job Corps for services as determined appropriate through assessment and individual service strategy planning.

c. Project Lead the Way: WCW actively coordinates its youth activities with Project Lead the Way in the school districts offering this program through its youth council and youth

service coordination efforts. Manufacturing sector activities frequently feature PLW involvement.

- d. **Department of Public Instruction Career Clusters:** WDW has adopted the Career Cluster structure for its Career Pathways/RISE efforts to assure ease of collaboration with PK-16 efforts in the region.
- e. **Career and technical education:** Youth Service staff interface regularly with school district career and technical education staff to coordinate youth service activities. Youth Council activities frequently feature this area as one of critical importance.
- f. **Wisconsin Covenant:** WDW attempts to alert youth to this program. Wisconsin Covenant is featured as an exhibit at the regional Career Valley career fair which attracts 2500 students annually..
- g. **Homeless and Runaway youth services:** Youth Service staff are in continuous contact with homeless and runaway service providers to identify youth appropriate for WIA services.
- h. **Financial literacy:** Is part of youth career academy academic enrichment curriculum and an integral part of the overall youth workshop structure.
- i. **Americorps:** WCW is currently seeking to collaborate with Americorps and is seeking designation as an Americorps provider. WCW is actively pursuing integration with this program strategy to enhance youth services.
- j. **STEM Initiatives:** Through the Youth Council WDW attempts to be aware of STEM initiatives in the region and to support eligible youth who may be interested in and appropriate for service through these efforts.

2. Regional Efforts With Regard To Youth Initiatives.

WCWWDB is developing Youth Career Laddering Academies that will combine the elements of community service, education, training, career exploration and longer term career development within high demand career sectors to help meet the future workforce demands in West Central Wisconsin.

The academies were first developed in the summer of 2007 and focused on manufacturing careers. Health care careers were added in 2008. Summer 2009 academies will still focus on health care and manufacturing with an emphasis on Renewable Energy / Bio-Technology / Green Jobs and also introduce youth to careers in sustainable agriculture. Future Academy development ideas include; Finance Careers, Hospitality, Tourism and Customer Service, and Automotive Technology.

3. Connection Between Youth Program And The Job Center Service Delivery System

The West Central Workforce Development Area intends to operate WIA programs within the context of a broader youth services strategy. This strategy will incorporate strong collaboration between WIA Job Center-based services, school-based services provided through educational institutions and other community-based youth services. The Youth Council for the region will include representatives of all of these organizations and will provide advice to the respective organizational structures as to how to bring about a comprehensive youth career/vocational services strategy for the region. Cross representation will be maintained with the two area School-to-Work/Tech Prep Councils that serve the area. The WDB will provide business input to the Youth Council as well as these two other regional bodies. WIA services will be viewed as an

integral part of this overall youth strategy and joint, collaborative planning will be encouraged in all appropriate instances.

a. How will it be integrated into the one-stop system?

Youth Services Specialists will be housed in each Job Center and will be responsible for implementing youth services in each county. The Job Centers will be the primary delivery vehicle for youth services, which will concentrate on bridging the gap between education and employment in keeping with the Youth Service Goals identified above. The Job Centers will be the focal point of identifying employment and work-based learning opportunities for young persons, assessing vocational needs, developing service plans, matching eligible youth with opportunities, monitoring progress in attaining goals and providing follow-up.

Youth Specialists will develop county-based youth services teams to be comprised of area secondary and post-secondary educators and other local youth service providers to coordinate services and collaborate on service design and implementation issues. This team approach will be designed to assure the maximum effectiveness of the variety of youth service resources in the area while minimizing overlap and duplication as indicated below.

b. Coordination

Job Center Youth Service Specialists will be expected to maintain on-going contact with the entire array of youth service organizations in their respective service areas. This will of course include school-to-work, youth apprenticeship, school counselors, special education instructors and other educators engaged in vocationally related school programs. Additionally, services will be integrated with those of Human/Social Service agencies, Child Support entities, Juvenile Court officials and community based organizations that provide youth services. Coordination shall also involve County Youth Extension Agents, Junior Achievement, Wisconsin Conservation Corps, Big Brother/Sister Programs and Boy/Girl Scouts. Such individuals will be asked to participate in Job Center based Youth advisory committees, or if current youth committees exist, Job Center staff will attempt to participate on those committees to foster cooperation and youth service strategy development.

This comprehensive strategy will seek to assure that disadvantaged youth will be connected to the resulting system, including youth in transitional settings such as foster care and adjudicated youth. This will include youth transitioning to adulthood as well as younger youth needing longer-term youth service support.

An Ad Hoc committee has been formed to coordinate the development of Youth Apprenticeship, TANF and other work-based learning strategies for the region. Representatives of CESA 10 & 11, CVTC, WITC and Workforce Resource comprise this committee which is charged with developing integrated responses to funding initiatives.

The intent is to utilize all such resources to develop the comprehensive youth services strategy referenced above. Whenever feasible, such applications for assistance will be jointly developed and submitted. As the Youth Council becomes operational, this Council will be instrumental in such discussions and integration strategies.

c. WIA Title I - Job Corps and Youth Opportunity Grants

Job Corps maintains a recruitment presence in the Eau Claire Job Center and Job Center staff from throughout the region have been oriented to Job Corps selection criteria and recruitment procedures. It is not anticipated that Youth Opportunity Grants will be functioning in the WDA due to the area not having been designated as eligible.

4. Describe how services are provided or referrals made for youth who are not eligible for WIA youth services.

Youth who do not meet WIA eligibility criteria will be encouraged to access general public Job Center services including use of the Job Information Centers, participation in Job and Career Fairs, accessing work-based learning opportunities that are available to the general public. It is desired that area young people gain familiarity with Job Center services while in school in order to assist them with career and employment needs throughout life. It is intended that Job Centers become a critical element in informing area young people of the opportunities that exist in their home and surrounding communities. This is essential to helping them make better career and education choices while assisting in retention of youth for the region's workforce.

Each Job Center maintains an extensive listing of non-Job Center Services through its resource directories and Menus of Service. Youth will be referred to agencies appropriate to their needs such as County Human/Social Services, Technical Colleges, school-based services, Job Corp, Youth Conservation Corps, and the variety of community-based youth services that exist throughout the region.

5. Describe how the WDA will provide the ten required program elements for the WIA youth program design.

The Youth Services design is to be based on an individualized assessment process that results in an Individual Service Strategy. That strategy will include any and all elements of the WIA service elements identified in this section and all of those required in the Act. Emphasis will be placed on identifying necessary educational objectives that will aid in long-term career development. Youth Service Specialists will maintain flexible WIA budgets that allow for the purchase of services as needed, and the brokering of services from other non-WIA sources when feasible. The service providers are identified through the Youth Procurement System identified in Section 9 below. Planning will be done in cooperation with the eligible young person, parents, educators and other youth service professionals with whom the youth may be connected.

Particular emphasis will be placed on Summer Career Laddering Exploration Academies and Employment activities, which can expose youth to a variety of alternative work and learning opportunities while not detracting from required academic work during the school year. The greater access to eligible youth will allow for the development of a comprehensive plan that will utilize summer activities as a launching point for year-round services. Planning and assessment will begin in the spring for the summer's activities. These will then lead to a reassessment at the end of the summer for in-school programming as needed and available during the school year. This will provide the 12-month follow-up and will allow reassessment each spring to determine if additional summer activity is warranted.

A natural progression can be maintained commencing with an introduction to work-based learning concepts through community and public service activities, work behavior assessments, supervisory mentoring and coaching, linked to related academic enrichment. Tutoring and other support can be provided as needed. The progression can move through career exploration phases with area employers, orientation to education and training requirements for occupational areas of interest that will be linked with academic preparation in the school setting for in-school youth. The eventual outcome of internships, youth apprenticeships, enrollment in post-secondary education and eventual unsubsidized placement is the desired outcome. Post placement follow-up and support may be provided to assure retention and increased success.

Mentoring and coaching services linked with those provided by schools and other youth services agencies will be integral to the success of the youth strategy. Intensive follow-along and follow-up services will also be an essential element. Such services may be accessed for 12 months or more to assure the most positive outcomes.

Business and labor involvement will be encouraged through the business and community outreach efforts of each Job Center and youth services team. West Central has a business-education partnership data-base that will be updated to assist in identifying those businesses and organizations willing to provide such partnership opportunities and staff will assist in making linkages between those organizations, schools and youth who would benefit.

Preparation for unsubsidized employment will be the primary goal of the entire WIA youth strategy. The region's youth competency system which addresses work-maturity, pre-employment, academic skills and job . specific skills preparation are all elements of this strategy. As stated previously, the strategy starts with assessment in each of these areas to determine the specific needs of eligible youth. Upon identification of need, the appropriate service strategy will be developed from the entire array of available services. Strategies exist to address all elements of youth employment preparation including educational attainment, work-behavior development, job skills training and support service provision necessary to enable youth to participate in activities.

The region has a highly developed infra-structure that links work-based learning under WIA with regular school learning opportunities, alternative educational services and GED/HSED services. In many cases throughout the region the WIA service strategy is an integral portion of the educational attainment strategy, providing the work-maturity, pre-employment and work-based learning activities that round out the educational strategy.

The additional focus of the Youth Council on membership by Big-Brother/Sister, Boy/Girl Scouts and other community youth service organizations will assist in broadening the foundation for WIA youth strategies. These organizations have strong youth mentorship and leadership components that can provide models to be integrated into the WIA structure. That structure is currently very well developed in the areas of career services, paid work-experience, vocational exploration, service-learning, applied academics and exposure to occupational training alternatives. This new combination will result in a more complete service strategy.

These new service elements will be integrated into both year-round and summer program designs. The summer program will be further developed to have a more sequential-developmental program emphasis with younger youth gaining experience in structured work-based and applied learning environments that address community service needs leading to more private-sector career oriented experiences in later stages of program involvement. There will be increasing emphasis on basic work-maturity development in earlier program stages moving to career exploration modules followed by direct career-employment and leadership development experiences in later stages of program involvement.

All of these services will be overseen by WIA youth specialists who will link their activities with those of school-based guidance professionals, human/social service professionals, and community-based services as a part of the integrated system referenced above. Support services and referrals for more in-depth assistance, such as AODA, mental health or other services will be available through the network of services that each Job Center is connected with.

6. Increasing Out-of-School Youth Participation.

a. Current and Planned Recruitment and Retention Strategies

West Central WDA will embark upon a strategy to identify individuals exiting the K-12 educational system without initially enrolling in further education, the military or self-sustaining employment. This targeting process will ensure identification of those leaving without graduation as well as others without career direction. This effort is yielding successes in achieving higher levels of out-of-school program enrollments. In addition, efforts will be

continued with the maintenance of referral networks with other youth serving networks that concentrate efforts on those who have left school.

b. Basic Skills Deficiency Assessment and Proficiency

The following assessment tools are used to assess reading and Math levels

- WRAT3 . Reading
- WRAT3 . Math
- TABE

All out-of school youth must take the TABE. In other words, even if the participant is 9.0 or above in both math and reading after taking the WRAT3, the TABE must still be administered. Math and Reading tests (minimum of one each) must be administered to all WIA participants.

All Out-of-School youth who are basic skills deficient will be in the Literacy and Numeracy performance measure. These youth are referred to area ABE and Literacy services to improve on basic literacy skills.

7. Youth Definitions

a. LOCAL DEFINITION OF THE SIXTH YOUTH ELIGIBILITY CRITERION –

The local definition of requiring additional assistance shall be defined as follows:

- Individuals with disabilities
- Youth who are behind their intended graduating class in credits toward graduation
- Youth with alcohol and other drug abuse issues
- Youth assessed as deficient in pre-employment, basic work maturity and/or job retention skills using the Workforce Resource Individual Service Strategy Assessment guide or similar process which identifies specific measurable criteria for such determination
- Youth deficient in "basic literacy or numeracy skills" including those assessed at literacy and numeracy levels below those required for a selected course of study or specified for the participant's specified occupational goal.

b. Local Definition of Deficient in Basic Literacy Skills

- The individual has English reading, writing, speaking or computing skills assessed at below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test or comparable criterion-referenced skills assessment or who are assessed at literacy and numeracy levels below those required for a selected course of study or specified for the participant's specified occupational goals as determined by educational institution or employer assessments.

c. Local Definition for “Faces Serious Barriers” And “Needs Additional Assistance”

If the Youth is found eligible for a 5% window because he/she is one of the following:

- Behind intended graduating class in credits toward graduation
- Has alcohol or drug abuse issues
- Assessed as deficient in pre-employment, basic work maturity and/or job retention skills

8. How the WDB Will Target and Serve Youth Most In Need Of Services

A process of target group prioritization similar to that described under Adult Services is utilized that includes emphasis on children of veterans, youth with disabilities, youth aging out of foster care, youth with English language deficits, youth offenders and the other barriers identified in the youth service definitions. These barriers are incorporated into the enrollment priority assessment process that is applied to all applicants seeking services and individual barrier assessments are weighed in the participant selection process.

9. Youth Procurement

Workforce Resource solicits applications for youth service providers in compliance with the federal Workforce Investment Act through the Service Provider Registration System located on its website (www.workforceresource.org). This system is an on-going solicitation necessitated by the method of youth service delivery in the region. Youth services are provided on an individualized, case-managed basis in which Workforce Resource staff, under the design element provisions of WIA assess youth needs, develop service strategies and secure or provide the necessary services outlined in the service strategy. The on-going service provider solicitation allows the design element staff to match individual needs to available service providers. Should no service provider respond in the needed category, the Youth Service staff are charged with further identification of a provider to meet the assessed need or deliver the necessary service directly. Because of the dispersed rural nature of the region's youth population and the unpredictable nature of what and when a given service may be needed to address an individual need this registry is an essential tool for service delivery.

In addition to the design element services identified above and Summer Employment programming, which are directly provided by Workforce Resource staff, the following services must be available to youth who are eligible, enrolled in Workforce Investment Act services and assessed as needing these services.

- Paid and Unpaid Work Experience
- Occupational Skill Training
- Tutoring, Study Skills Training and Instruction Leading to completion of secondary school including dropout prevention strategies
- Alternative Secondary School Services
- Supportive Services
- Adult Mentoring
- Follow-up Services
- Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling
- Leadership Development Activities

The Workforce Investment Act requires that there be a competitive procurement process for these program elements. Not all of these services are paid+ service components, as several are provided on a volunteer or contributed basis. Through the Service Provider Registration System, Workforce Resource continually solicits potential service providers and maintains a service provider database for each of these services across the entire West Central Workforce Development Area (WDA #8). Any response to this solicitation that shall be construed to be in conflict or in direct competition with the Workforce Resource Youth Services shall be referred to the Youth Council for action. Should a neutral rating and review be necessary to select the most appropriate vendor, the Youth Council is empowered to utilize an objective third party to conduct said review and make any subsequent service provider decision in an objective manner. The West Central Regional Planning Commission has been contacted, and is available to assist in this manner, as needed. The cost of any such objective review will be born by Workforce Investment Youth funds. The vendor registration process has built in tracking report capacity to allow monitoring of the vendor registrations to assure that procurement standards are being adhered to.

10. Youth Procurement Waivers

WCWWDB and Workforce Resource, Inc. received a waiver from DWD accepting the above Youth Procurement procedure on March 30, 2009. See Attachment L. WCWWDB and Workforce Resource requested that waiver based upon the rural nature of the service area and the lack of available competitive procurement options as indicated through the youth procurement processes identified above or recognition of acknowledgement through approval of this plan of the of the Procurement System described above as being in compliance with WIA requirements.

F. New Service Delivery Strategies for WDAs Failing Performance Measures

Workforce Resource has exceeded or met all performance standards.

G. Strategies for Faith-based and Community Organizations

The county team strategies outlined elsewhere in this plan are the primary vehicle for assuring integration and coordination with faith-based and community based organizations. Each County team is charged with identifying the network of organizations that can assist in identifying those in need of services and providing the community services that are available and determined as necessary to address needs. Each County Team is required to maintain a data-base of community and faith based services that may be needed by program participants. The localized funding allocation process allows resources to be utilized to provide these services on an assessed need basis and facilitates directing funds to those entities. Additionally, faith based and community based organizations are sources of Job Center service referrals and an integral to the overall service delivery strategy for each Job Center as sources of program enrollees.

VII. Service Providers and Oversight**A. Selection of Service Providers****1. Describe the process the WDB will use to select service providers for the following types of services:****a. Core**

The Workforce Development Board in collaboration with the County Board's Consortium selected Workforce Resource, Inc. to provide WIA core services in each of the area Job Centers based on agreement with the Secretary of the Department of Workforce Development. (Criteria used to make this determination may be found in sections b-d below.) This organization, formerly the service staff of the Workforce Development Board, has extensive experience in this area and will maintain this service capacity during this period. The organization currently has staff located in each area Job Center and maintains extensive inter-agency contacts throughout the region. Services to be provided by Workforce Resource include reception, intake, referral, initial eligibility determination, resource room coverage, information on job openings and labor market information, and information for employers on available job center services

b. Intensive

The Workforce Development Board in collaboration with the County Board's Consortium selected Workforce Resource, Inc. to provide WIA intensive services in each of the area Job Centers based on agreement with the Secretary of the Department of Workforce Development. (Criteria used to make this determination may be found in sections b-d below.) This organization, formerly the service staff of the Workforce Development Board, has extensive experience in this area and will maintain this service capacity during this period. The organization currently has staff located in each area Job Center and maintains extensive inter-agency contacts throughout the region. Services to be provided by Workforce Resource include reception, intake, referral, initial eligibility determination, resource room coverage, information on job openings and labor market information, and information for employers on available job center services

c. Youth Services

Workforce Resource electronically solicits applications for providers of service for economically disadvantaged youth in compliance with the federal Workforce Investment Act through the Service Provider Registration System located on its website (www.workforceresource.org). Youth services are provided on an individualized, case-managed basis in which Workforce Resource staff assess youth needs, develop service strategies and secure or provide the necessary services outlined in

the service strategy. In addition to the services identified above and Summer Employment programming, which are directly provided by Workforce Resource staff, the following services must be available to youth who are eligible, enrolled in Workforce Investment Act services and assessed as needing these services.

- Paid and Unpaid Work Experience
- Occupational Skill Training
- Tutoring, Study Skills Training and Instruction Leading to completion of secondary school including dropout prevention strategies
- Alternative Secondary School Services
- Supportive Services
- Adult Mentoring
- Follow-up Services
- Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling
- Leadership Development Activities

The Workforce Investment Act requires that there be a competitive procurement process for these program elements. Not all of these services are paid service components, as several are provided on a volunteer or contributed basis. Through the Service Provider Registration System, Workforce Resource continually solicits potential service providers and maintains a service provider database for each of these services across the entire West Central Workforce Development Area (WDA #8). Any response to this solicitation that shall be construed to be in conflict or in direct competition with the Workforce Resource Youth Services shall be referred to the Youth Council for action. Should a neutral rating and review be necessary to select the most appropriate vendor, the Youth Council is empowered to utilize an objective third party to conduct said review and make any subsequent service provider decision in an objective manner. The West Central Regional Planning Commission has been contacted, and is available to assist in this manner, as needed. The cost of any such objective review will be born by Workforce Investment Youth funds. The vendor registration process has built in tracking report capacity to allow monitoring of the vendor registrations to assure that procurement standards are being adhered to.

3. Core, Intensive and Youth Service Provision

a. Core

Workforce Resource will provide WIA core services in each of the area Job Centers. Workforce Resource Consultants and Resource Specialists will be assigned to each Job Center to identify individuals in need of program assistance, determine assistance needs, design program strategies in partnership with those seeking services, secure necessary intensive services, evaluate effectiveness, provide support services, placement assistance and follow-up.

b. Intensive

Intensive services are secured based on assessed need by Job Center Consultants who then broker services to meet those needs from service providers in consultation with program registrants. These services are all provided through area Job Centers.

c. Youth

Youth Services Specialists will be housed in each Job Center and will be responsible for implementing youth services in each county. The Job Centers will be the primary delivery vehicle for youth services, which will concentrate on bridging the gap between education and employment in keeping with the Youth Service Goals identified above. The Job Centers will be the focal point of identifying employment and work-based learning opportunities for young persons, assessing vocational needs, developing service plans, matching eligible youth with opportunities, monitoring progress in attaining goals and providing follow-up.

Youth Specialists will work with area secondary and post-secondary educators and other local youth service providers to coordinate services and collaborate on service design and implementation issues. This team approach will be designed to assure the maximum effectiveness

of the variety of youth service resources in the area while minimizing overlap and duplication as indicated below.

B. Oversight and Training of Service Providers

1. Monitoring and Oversight

The West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board and Workforce Resource subscribe to a philosophy of Continuous Quality Improvement and models its Plan for Monitoring and Evaluation to reinforce this philosophy. Performance data is an essential element of this process as it provides the ~~Business Results~~ by which an entity can determine where it is succeeding and where it needs to improve.

Key to this process is access to accurate data which reflects the outcomes that are determined necessary to judge effectiveness. Initially there was great uncertainty about the accuracy and accessibility and therefore acquired an internal system for tracking performance data by region, county team and individual staff member. This performance data has been used to determine performance in relation to established program service goals and monitor compliance with expenditure limitations. Additionally, Workforce Resource manages an internal accounting system which is used in conjunction with the performance reporting system to provide the data necessary to manage program operations and provide accountability necessary within the monitoring and evaluation system.

With the advent of greater accuracy, dependability and accessibility of data from the Department of Workforce Development's ASSET system, this data has been integrated into this overall monitoring and evaluation system. West Central Wisconsin has been a leader in utilizing the data from the ASSET system for monitoring and evaluation purposes and has developed systems to synthesize and analyze this data for areas throughout the state.

The tools and processes below are used by the Workforce Development Board, the County Boards Consortium and Workforce Resource to monitor and evaluate the provision of services within the region:

Internal Activity and Documentation Reviews . Each program activity is accompanied by documentation that the activity has taken place in compliance with regulations and local policy and procedure and is also accompanied by documentation of any resultant expenditure of funds. Each such transaction is reviewed by at least one individual other than the individual initiating the activity. In addition, each activity generally requires documentation of participant participation via signature that is verified as a part of the review process. This documentation is further reviewed during the local and management file reviews cited below.

Monthly County Team Case and File Reviews . At least monthly, each team conducts a review of participant activity including overall summaries of case loads and sampling of files for completeness and accuracy.

Monthly Activity and Fiscal Reports by Region and County . These reports are generated and distributed to the Workforce Development Board, Management Team and service provider staff. Monthly desk reviews take place at each of these levels with any deficiencies noted and followed up upon as needed.

Monthly County Activity Reports . County Coordinators synthesize data into a county summary report of activities by activity and conduct monthly reviews with service delivery teams on at least a monthly basis.

Quarterly Site Visits . The Executive Director makes a site visit to each County Team once per quarter on a scheduled basis. These reviews consist of examination of performance and

expenditure data that have been summarized in the monthly reports. In addition, direct service tracking reports that identify numbers served, exited and the nature of exits by individual are reviewed along with fiscal reports. This monitoring also assures that the review processes cited above are occurring as required.

Twice-Annual Management on-site file reviews . twice a year, Management Team members go on-site to review the content of physical paper and electronic files and conduct staff interviews to examine and verify the quality of service and the accuracy of documentation of program activities. This monitoring also assures that the review processes cited above are occurring as required.

Quarterly DWD performance data . When available, quarterly performance data is obtained from the Department of Workforce Development and processed through a locally developed data analysis system that is capable of generating regional, county team and individual service delivery performance reports which are shared with management and service delivery staff and reviewed as a part of the quarterly site review process. This summary data is made available to the Workforce Resource Inc. Board, the Workforce Development Board and the County Boardsq Consortium.

Annual Performance Reviews . the data collected through the monthly, quarterly and annual performance, fiscal, and on-site review process is integrated into a self evaluation process in which performance in the attainment of goals, quantity of effort and quality of effort are rated by the individual staff person, direct supervisor and a management team member to arrive at a composite rating to each individuals performance.

Annual Audits . The organization participates in an annual audit of its fiscal and programmatic activities conducted by an independent auditing firm. The results of this audit are shared with the staff, Workforce Resource Inc. Board, the Workforce Development Board, County Boardsq Consortium and funding sources.

On-Site Visits by the Workforce Development Board and County Boardsq Consortium . At least once annually (preferably twice), a team of Workforce Development Board and County Boardsq Consortium members visit each Job Center and meet with staff representatives to review performance and discuss local needs, services and other issues.

The results of each of these processes are shared with Board members and local elected officials in either complete or summary formats as appropriate. Successes are documented and form the bases for any incentives that may be made available. Deficiencies identified through these processes are documented and provide the bases for corrective action planning and staff development and technical assistance that may be required

2. Staff ASSET Training

Workforce Resource retains a Staff Training and Information Services Coordinator who is responsible for the integration of information systems training and development and the monitoring staff development needs as well as program performance report development and generation. The organization has developed a unique information management process which has enabled the attainment of performance standards through intensive monitoring and training to address deficiencies in state reporting and local data entry. Staff participates in all DWD sponsored training and ASSET training is incorporated into every monthly staff meeting conducted by WRI.

3. Monitoring

The monitoring and evaluation system described above is designed to identify any such deficiencies and provide training and other corrective action to address such needs.

4. Local Data Systems

Workforce Resource maintains a local data system. This system allows for the integration of participant activity tracking integrated with program expenditure tracking. This system generates data that allows for day-to-day program decision making that could not be accomplished through the current and past versions of the ASSET system.

VIII. Performance and Accountability

A. Local Performance Standards

No standards in addition to those required by the Department of Labor and Department of Workforce Development are currently being employed.

B. Describe the local area continuous improvement activities and performance data implications

The West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board and Workforce Resource are certified Enterprise members and as such infuse all activities with the philosophy of Continuous Quality Improvement. With the change of the Enterprise system to the Workforce Excellence Network, the organization is moving to adapt its Quality Improvement strategies to the new guidelines and will be applying for similar recognition through this new system. Performance data is an essential element of this process as it provides the ~~%Business Results+~~ by which an entity can determine where it is succeeding and where it needs to improve. Key to this process is access to accurate data which reflects the outcomes that are determined necessary to judge effectiveness. The uncertainty of the data-tracking systems at this juncture makes it difficult to provide anything other than general statements about the use of such data in the CQI process. In the absence of an adequate state data system, the local area will modify its current internal system for tracking performance data by region, team and individual. This performance data will be gathered and initial results evaluated to determine performance in relation to established goals

Business Results are one of seven key elements of a Continuous Quality Improvement Strategy which must also include evaluations of:

- Leadership
- Strategic Planning
- Customer and Market Focus
- Information and Analysis
- Human Resource Focus and, Process Management

The Board will integrate the setting of standards, measurement of effectiveness and on-going progress assessments of all of these areas into its Quality Improvement strategies. This will be accomplished by the establishment and standards and the communication to service providers of performance and quality expectations accompanied by training and development of necessary skills to achieve standards and measurement of standards attainment. Recognition for the attainment of standards and corrective action strategies when standards are not achieved are necessary elements in the system. It will be expected that these concepts will be utilized by the inter-agency Job Center Management Teams as they translate Board expectations into action at the Job Center Service Team level and beyond to other partner agencies that provide services outside the Job Centers.

Job Center Management Teams will conduct quarterly reviews of standards in conjunction with committees of the Board. Annually there will be a detailed review of each Job Center's performance to identify quality improvement strategies in anticipation of the coming year's strategic goal setting. This becomes the process of continuous review, improvement and adjustment of goals and standards of performance and quality.

C. Common Measures Implications

The West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board is committed to preparing adult workers for jobs that will move them into self sustaining employment that offers advancement potential. We

continually assess our services and make necessary improvements to services to increase both efficiency and effectiveness in all programs. Transitioning to Common Performance measures will have the following impact on local processes and service delivery.

1. OJT opportunities for Adults and Dislocated Workers will be more readily offered and approved. Previous performance measures made it difficult to provide OJT\$ without being negatively impacted by Credential Performance Measures.
2. Basic skills deficient out of school youth will be required to remediate their reading and or math skills. The TABE will be administered shortly after an individual's %Date of Participation+and then again annually to determine the degree of improvement.

PY 09 COMMON PERFORMANCE MEASURE GOALS

Adult	Entered Employment	82.9%
	Retention	84.3%
	Earnings	\$8.80/hr
D/W	Entered Employment	91.6%
	Retention	93.7%
	Earnings	13.40/hr
Youth	Placement in Employment and Education	75%
	Attainment of a Degree or Certificate	60%
	Literacy and Numeracy Gain	30%

D. Sustaining and Maintaining Adult and DW performance during PY 09-10.

The West Central Wisconsin WDB is committed to preparing adult workers for jobs that will move them into self sustaining employment that offers advancement potential. We continually assess our services and make necessary improvements to services to increase both efficiency and effectiveness in all programs.

E. Addressing Youth Common Measures transition, while ensuring performance on older and younger youth measures does not start to decline.

West Central Wisconsin WDB has been providing full service programs to both older and younger youth since 1984. We will continue to focus on placement in employment and education and degree or certificate attainment for youth. The biggest challenge we face is meeting the literacy numeracy gains for Out of School Youth. We continually evaluate and improve program delivery that will motivate older youth to take on this challenge.

IX. Waivers

WCWWDB and Workforce Resource, Inc. received a waiver from DWD accepting the above Youth Procurement procedure on March 30, 2009. See Attachment L. WCWWDB and Workforce Resource request extension of that waiver based upon the rural nature of the service area and the lack of available competitive procurement options as indicated through the youth procurement processes identified in the Youth Procurement (Section X. 10) above, or through approval of this plan, acknowledgement of acceptance of that Youth Procurement methodology which was re-authorized and endorsed by the Regional Youth Council, Workforce Development Board and County Boards Consortium on February 20, 2009.